





THE WOOING OF WEBSTER

BY
A. M.

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FAUSTUS JUNIOR, PH.D.

THE BEAR HUNT ON FUJI-SAN.

By A. M.



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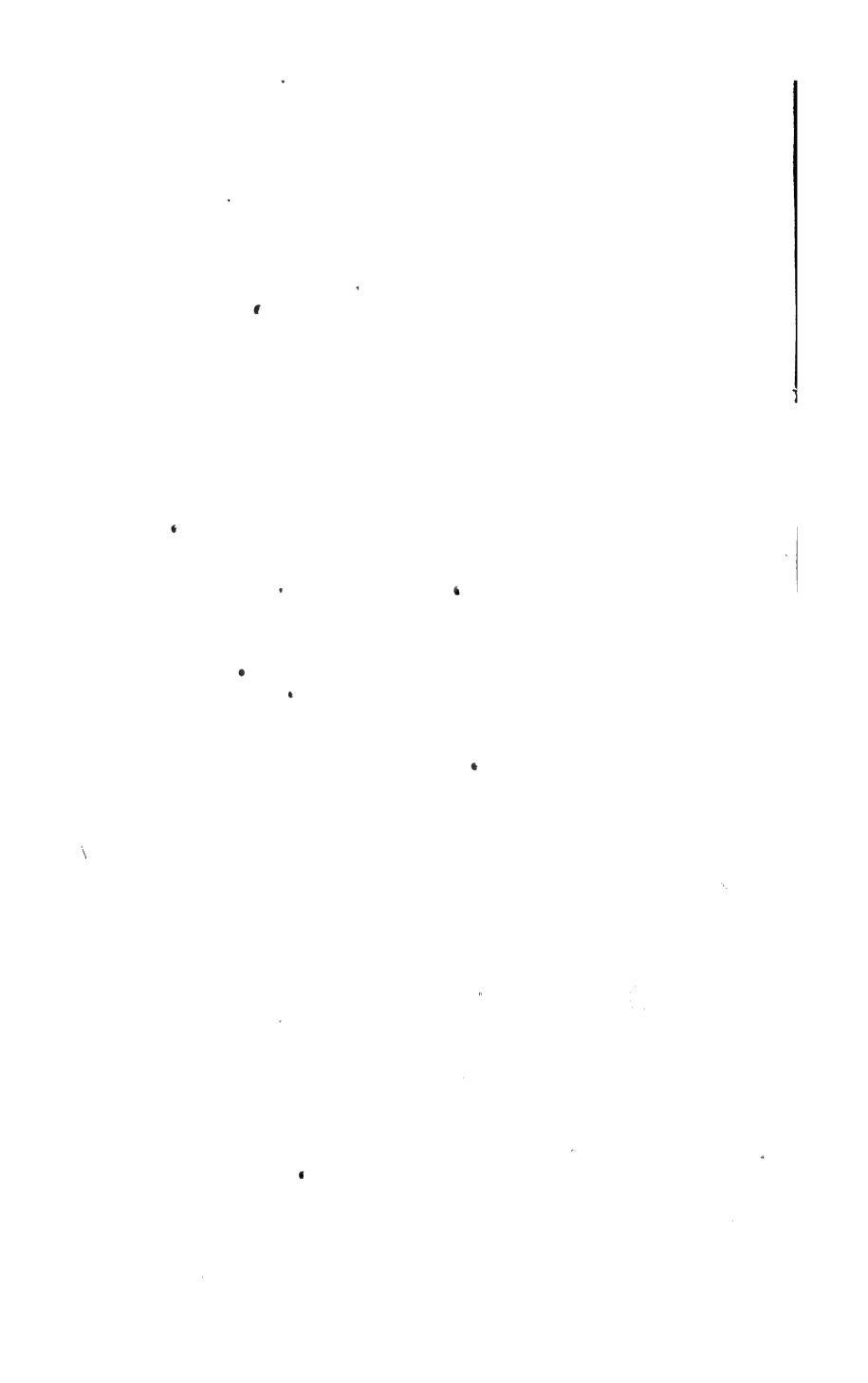
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THE WOOING OF WEBSTER.

TOLD UNDER THE JOGASHIMA LIGHTHOUSE,
MISAKI, JAPAN, JULY 1888.

"I-YAH! Here we are! Down among the wind-whisked tussocks there is good! .

'Brother, let us take together
An easeful period.
There is worse than to be as we are—
Cast out, not of men but of God!'

Although it's petticoats that's the matter with us," Webster muttered as he threw himself down upon the seaward slope of the gorse.

"Now then, you crack-brained descendant of a line of lunatics, what are you after, and what halting doggerel is that?" I asked, as I accepted his suggestion and planted the breadth of my back among the bracken.

"It's peace and quiet, and relief from the sight of flounces and petticoats, and of female ankles, slim, beefy, and intermediate, that I'm after; and as for the poetry, your imputation is a dirty libel, for which I've a mind to punch your head!"

"Don't, for goodness' sake! Once in a lifetime is ample. I shall never forget the way you got in that jaw-smasher. Confound you! It sets my teeth all on edge and my head humming like telegraph wires when the wind is screaming across the Plains of Heaven* to think of it now, and it's the best part of twenty years that lies on this side of that blow."

"Well, and didn't you deserve it, my son? I had come up, a raw Scotchey,—first time south of the Grampians,—and you and your eye-glasses, and your rings, and your scarf-pins, and your watch-chains, and your seals, and your other fal-de-rals, must needs poke clumsy jokes at Sandy's Glengarry and the architecture of his clothes generally, with a few rasps at the matter of his 'awkcent' in the passing. Well, Sandy turns on his heel and comes right up to you, and tells you that if these were Oxford manners he didn't think much of them. Then you all sniggered, and made audible side remarks,—talking *at* a man and not *to* him,—which after all is only a dirty woman's or parson's trick,—and as your nose seemed to support the most aggressive and discomposing eye-glass in the whole crowd, I just brought the back of my left hand across it as forcibly as I could without irretrievably ruining its frailty. Remember what happened next?"

"Ra-ther," I answered ruefully; "or at least part of it."

"Was it two rounds, or three now?" he went on meditatively. "Perhaps it was three. Anyhow, I

* A plateau near Yokohama.

recollect I had just knocked you over, and was taking down my sleeves, when a scout rushed up with the news that the lists were out and that the Scotchey had got the first scholarship."

"A promising beginning for a Damon and Pythias friendship, wasn't it?"

"With an Englishman, yes! You see you are queer folks south of the Tweed. If a man is to get on with you he must do one of two things: he must either give you a thorough, jolly good hammering straight away to begin with, or he must conclusively show that he can do it if you give him any occasion to. After you've broken the ice in that way, and shown John Bull that you've grit in you, he is one of the finest fellows to get along with in the world. Sticks to you like a leech when you get into a tight fix, and gives himself no end of trouble to get you out of it, and won't let you say even so much as 'thank you' for his pains! Oh! you've got your good points, you Southerners, but a man has to begin by fighting you to find them out. If he licks you, so much the better; though if he makes a good stand-up set-to of it it's enough. Yes, my son, we got on very well afterwards, although we Balliol Scotchies used to get called 'hard-headed brutes,' by way of a compliment."

He relapsed into silence, and puffed vigorously at his dearly-beloved meerschaum.

That meerschaum was a joy to look at, and, as Webster said, a still intenser joy to smoke. But that last averment had to be taken on trust, inasmuch as Frankie took very good care to let no one put the

thing to the practical proof. That cutty was for Webster's own cheek, and for it alone; and any one with the temerity to defile the stem of its sheeny sanctity with an unchaste and adulterous kiss would in all likelihood have come in for something a good deal more lurid and lambent than the curse of Reuben itself. You might flirt with any or all of the odd 20,000,000 petticoats in Japan without Frank ever so much as hinting that you were either a thief or a poacher; but just touch that precious pipe, and you might mistake the hole he usually kept it in for the front entrance to Tophet! Swear! Swear, do you say! Sakes alive! a sailorman's parrot was nothing to him! He would blaspheme in thirteen different languages, not counting dialects, among which latter Bullock-drivery and Aberdeenshire Scotch had the most pronounced and pungent flavour of raciness and profanity.

For the best part of ten minutes he lay still, and said nothing, and I was equally eloquent. It was at Misaki, two summers ago,—or was it three? Right in front of the mill-pond they mis-name the harbour lies a great ill-conditioned hobbledehoy sort of a lump of an island, called Jogashima. Folks are not quite agreed what purpose Providence had at the root of its wisdom teeth when it dumped it there. Professor East says its circuit must have been meant as a short-distance sailing course. But then, on a matter of this sort, East's opinion is not worth half the price of a second-hand pair of braces. He is a crank on yachting, and so far gone on it is he too that he not only makes it an unholy engine of systematic

Sabbath-breaking, but he seems in imminent danger of losing his immortal soul over it into the bargain. He has been heard to assert that if he croaks and goes aloft, and finds that there's no provision for periodic sailing races among the Saints, he means to petition the authorities to let him have a passport to navigate an asbestos 27-ft. rater on the Lake of Fire and Brimstone.

We—that is, one-half of a detachment that afterwards became martyrs to science—were camped in the single house on the landward shore of this island, just at the mouth of the mill-pond. There were two Daigakko Professors besides East, with a consignment of nitro-glycerine and infernal machines sufficient to dismember the whole Royal Family of Russia, and to leave something over for fireworks to celebrate the joyful event. Then there was Webster, sub-editor of the *Yokohama Snorter*, who had come down to write up the expedition for his rag. I had come along, partly out of a mild curiosity, and partly to kill time.

This afternoon, about five o'clock, a steam launch had run in with a cargo of petticoats from the Treaty Port. Webster looked at them getting into the punt to land with holy horror writ large on every wrinkle of his ugly phiz, and then he tapped me on the shoulder and asked me if I shouldn't like to sniff the evening breeze up under the Lighthouse. I don't dislike female society at all,—there are lots of good points about it,—but Webster did, and I didn't like to be thought unneighbourly. So I said I didn't mind; and here we were.

It was very beautiful, and very picturesque, and very romantic; but more than ten minutes doing nothing beyond watching the dip of the sun over the shoulder of Fuji gets abominably slow. So I gave Webster a kick in the ribs, and inquired the why and wherefore of his misguided misogyny.

"Don't punctuate your impertinent remarks on tender parts of my person with your dirty shoe leather in that way, please, and I may see fit to gratify your curiosity!" he said, catching me by the foot and almost wrenching my leg off.

He sat up, and, taking out his tobacco-pouch, began to refill his pipe with more than the care of a mother administering the feeding-bottle to her four months old first-born.

"Well, it is this way, you see. In the matter of women my virtue has been deficient from the start."

I couldn't help roaring at this compendious statement, made as it was with such grave and portentous solemnity.

"Well, you're a shallower fool than I took you to be, and that's saying a good deal," he expostulated, evidently considerably ruffled. "I don't mean to say I have been an immoral man in the usual sense of the word,—'cause I haven't, or at least only so in moderation. But Socrates says—rake the cinders of your classical recollections for the precise Dialogues—that virtue and knowledge are the same thing, and I'm inclined to believe he's on the spot when he says so. Now I'm speaking in the Socratic sense. I didn't know any women when I was a brat. I had no sisters. I never ran across any females, except

cows and cats and hens, when I was a youngster, and consequently when I tackled them as a grown-up I came an immortal howler! Hey! ho! But I did come the blooming idiot with them!"

He clasped his hands over his drawn-up knees, with the stem of his dearly beloved between his two forefingers and the middle one, and looked dreamily and weariedly toward the smoke-wreaths oozing slowly and heavily from Oshima.

"What sort of a howler did you come?" I asked at last.

"What sort?" He placed the pipe in his mouth and struck a match. "Oh," he said slowly and nonchalantly, as he threw the flickering vesta over his shoulder; "oh! I only took them seriously!"

"How?" I queried. "Spin us the yarn. Out with the autobiography!"

"No, that's altogether too big an order. But say! You knew me in Oxford. Well, a woman sent me there, and that wasn't so bad. You knew me ten years later in Australia."

"Yes. Shan't forget the fine morning I pinked that 'gater for you in the Fitzroy. That was a near thing, my boy!"

"It was. It was an odd meeting. I fancied it was a cedar log, and I was much discomposed when it snapped at me. That was a fine shot of yours. But never mind that. I say a woman sent me to Australia. That was bad. And it was a woman that drove me from Australia, which was worse. Now the latter two episodes are not for publication—at least just at present, because they're other folks'

secrets as well as mine. But the first piece of foolery will help to pass the time of day till these minxes think it time to retire for a fresh coat of paint. So here's how it came to pass that you got that first-class licking in Balliol quad.

"It was in the kirk that the mischief had its commencement. There was a gallery round three sweeps of the circle, and the pulpit occupied the fourth. I sat down below, to the left of the rostrum where the Holy Man of God ranted and banged the Bible, and raised the stoor from the cushions in aureole-like clouds. *She* sat in a plush-cushioned seat in the front of the gallery to the right side of the Laird's pew, which was just *vis-à-vis* to the Devil-dodger in action. My seat had no cushions; they weren't fashionable in our quarter of the kirk, you see. The benches we sat upon might have been built for stools of repentance; they were hard enough and uneasy enough, anyhow. Yet I wouldn't have swapped positions with any soul in the building. Because, you understand, I could feed my e'en on *her* all the time, during the prayer even, through the slits 'twixt my outspread fingers.

"Of course, I was below her,—in some ways. My folks had been swinkers and hedgers and hinds and drudges on the lands of a master off and on for generations. That is my father's forbears. But, notwithstanding that, we have our coat-of-arms, and can trace ourselves right away back to the day of Bannockburn, when we got them. My mother—she died when I was a brat in the cradle—was a Macdonald of Glencoe. And if we didn't have the

dollars to maintain our dignity, we had pride enough any way to say nothing about it. My governor, in spite of his drudging, was the most outspoken wight in the country-side, and made Minister and Laird alike sit up and listen when he had a mind to. When the innovation in the posture of prayer came about in the kirk, he stood up like the valiant man he was and led a forlorn hope of one against the embattled authorities. God rest his soul—he had spunk and smeddum for a barnful.

“But he had also a plentiful lack of bawbees, because he was too honest to get rich by over-reaching his neighbours. Therefore his son had to work. I was thirteen when I was introduced to the dignity of labour and the blessings of industry, and twelve hours a day was the tale of my toil, and fourteen on Saturday, which was pay-day—it being highly proper that apprentices should be duly prepared to appreciate the holy calm of the Sabbath. I didn’t put on much flesh at that business. You can’t get into anything like decent condition on half-a-crown a week, which was the sum-total of my income. Four hungry years of this soul-eating treadmill, during which my only joy was stolen snatches at books I kept hid in holes all over the shop. And then one day I met *her*. She was on her pony; and in that hat and tight-fitting riding-habit you might guess she was a picture, and you would be right. She dropped her whip and I picked it up and gave it to her.”

Here Webster put his left palm on the crown of his head and brought it slowly down the side of his

face, finishing the motion with a quick outward sweep of the opened fingers.

"Whoo-osh!" he said. "She gave me a flashing smile, and her e'en went through me and thrilled me like a battle-song. • I stood still in my traces, with my blood tingling and my heart thumping, and a commotion among the molecules of my soul such as I had never felt before and never will again! Even all the gloriousness of the best Glenlivet is powerless to produce it.

"Ah me!" I was drunk, drunk, reeling drunk with love! That was on a Saturday; I didn't sleep all that night, yet on Sunday I was 'as fit as a fiddle. I didn't pay much heed to the Rev. John MacFadyen's homilies on Original Sin and Hell-fire and Damnation For Ever that day. But I was thinking; and by the end of the sermon I had made up my mind, and then when it came to the psalm, although I can't sing worth a cent, I got up and joined in 'I to the hills will lift mine eyes,' with all the stern determination of a death-doomed Covenanter before Drumclog or Bothwell Brig. That swelling outburst of the weird old wailing battle-tune that erstwhile sounded by the lonely tarn and on the bleak hill-side put the sword of the Lord and of Gideon in every one of my three-and-thirty vertebræ, and I determined to do it.

"It meant wooing and winning and wearing her, and it was to be done in the way that Scotchmen climb usually,—through the University. I had heard something about Bursaries at Aberdeen, and I found out more, and I meant to get one. Just

then, as luck would have, a new dominie had taken to wielding the tawse in the Parish School, and he had been fourth bursar in his time, which was no small beer for a schoolmaster. I went and saw him, and told him what I wanted, and he said if I meant business he would give me a trial. He gave me a fortnight's show, and then he asked me to help him in the school. Those were the times I worked! Sixteen hours a day, and sometimes two-and-twenty, and two meals to keep the machinery in motion. I had a fireless closet to sit in, where the rats played hide-and-seek beneath the door in summer, and the snow came drifting through in wreaths in winter. Hardship! Pouf! It was none! In a case of that sort you haven't time to feel it! • Every Sunday I saw *her*, and that was meat and drink and fire enough for me in those days.

“Well, I contrived to pack away in a little more than one year the work that takes most folks six. At last the competition came. It was a tussle. My heart sank a bit when I looked round on a sea of two hundred and forty faces all on the same errand as myself, and all meaning business. But I thought of the plush-cushioned pew in the front gallery of the Auld Kirk, and I screwed my courage up to the sticking-point, and I went in with all my heart, and with all my strength, and with all my soul, and with all my mind.

“We finished on a Wednesday; on a Saturday the result was to be announced.

“On the afternoon of that day the quad of King's College was seething with a roaring sea of student

life. At last the Senatus room door swings open, and the Janitor with a mace as big as himself steps out. We have just time to catch a glimpse of the long file of Professorial robes that flutter solemnly behind him, when we are carried on the crest of the crush right into the hall, which looks like a cross 'twixt Pandemonium and Donnybrook Fair. Meanwhile the Faculty has filed on to the platform by a side door, and the Principal sits him down in his chair of state, in all the dignity of robes of office, and (wonder of wonders), for once in his life, of clean linen. Gradually the uproar subsides, and the Principal slowly upends himself, clears his throat, and begins.

“ ‘Gentlemen! (tremendous cheers) you will now learn (A voice, “The hundred and nineteenth psalm”) the result of the competition for Bursaries just held. And I hope you will behave yourselves, for this uproar is perfectly disgraceful!’

“The Secretary of the Senatus opens a roll of papers, coughs, and then, in mellifluous accents, takes up his parable—

“ ‘The first Bursary to be disposed of is a Simpson Bursary of £35 in annual value, and has been awarded to the first in the order of merit, Francis Webster.’

“That was a moment, my son! A moment worth two years, six years, ten years of an ordinary life! I have never heard, and never shall ever hear, music like that cheer. You see, I had just as good as breasted the tape first from fifty yards back of scratch in the quarter, and they knew it and shouted

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like wild things! No! no!" he sighed, "that comes but once in a lifetime!"

I said something about the ovation that greeted him when he spread-eagled seven Victorian wickets for 46 in the Intercolonial on the Sydney Association Ground.

"Pouf," he said, flipping his fingers, "that was nought! That was only for honour and glory; *this* time I was fighting for *her*. And it was only *her* that was in my mind when the desks were jumping and the room was ringing with the cheering. Ow! The best game is but poor fun when you're only playing a lone hand for your filthy, dirty self!

"Of course I was the talk of the parish, and next Sunday I got far more attention from the congregation than the minister himself. She came right up to me at the door at the skailing of the kirk, and she shook me by the hand and said, 'Oh! I am so glad, Mr. Webster.'

"Heavens! man, that touch sent the blood swirling through my veins like the rush of the Dee in spate! I walked home with her, in Elysium, but worshipping humbly.

"Then I went to college and sat down to the stroke. The previous pace now told heavily on me, and I could bucket no longer. Then I broke up physically and could do no work, and folks thought I was done for. I wasn't though. In the midst of it all my head was as clear as a Queensland sky when an eighteen months' drought is hanging there, and just sixty degrees cooler. I didn't work much, but I worked with a purpose, and never threw away

a single shot. In those times there was a pith, a verve, and a spin in my stuff that was not of myself at all. It was inspiration. I was a poet in those days!" he said softly and absently; "a real, live poet!

"Man, you needn't laugh!" he protested. "It was true! No! I didn't pour out my immortal soul in agonies in the Poet's Corner of the *Aberdeen Free Press*, or spoil good ink and paper by scribbling halting doggerel. But a 'maker' I was for all that, and a right 'powerful 'maker' too. The music of energy was humming in my head when I went to sleep, and singing in my heart when I awoke.

"I lived on the hill-top and trod on rolling clouds, and although my fleshly knees tottered and my breath came hard in pants, I felt in my soul the mighty tread of a charging Highland battalion. I was strong, strong, strong in those days!

"Well, the exams. came round, and I was right on the spot, and I knew it. You know that springy sensation through all your frame when it's your day out with the leather, and you *feel* that the batsman is not born of woman that can keep you out of the wicket? Well, that was me that time! There were five events, and I ran clear first in four of them, and first equal in the fifth. And that, my son, is a record in the old shop even unto this day! And to this day I marvel how it was done. There were smarter men than I in the race, but they *weren't in love*, you see, and that perhaps made all the odds.

"Of course this brought me nearer her, but still I veiled my eyes, and adored from afar off. What

was in my mind I kept to myself hard and fast under lock and key in its innermost recesses.

"Next year came, and I braced me again for the tussle. And well I had need to, for half-a-dozen better men than I had sworn to press me hard and lower my colours between them. I was to be pounded front, flank, and rear with horse, foot, and artillery simultaneously. But I didn't fear or flinch.

"At Christmas I reached home, and went, of course, you know where. Sometimes I would meet her on the road; she once remarked that it was wonderful the number of times accident brought us across each other.

"One afternoon I met her in company with a local squireen, Kinnaird by name. He was a man that held his head high when he went among poor folks, and generally rated himself at an outrageous social valuation, all because his father had been a laird, and he hadn't to work for his living. Once, three years before, he had thrown the bridle of his horse to me at the town hall door as if I had been his flunkey, and I hadn't quite forgotten the favour. I just lashed the brute across the quarters, and Kinnaird had to trudge home through the mud on shank's mare, swearing many an ugly curse by the way. Well, this afternoon, of course, when I met her, my bonnet went off like a shot, and I got a flash of her eyes that was as meat and drink to my soul for a week of Sundays. But my lord of a lairdie would have it, an't please you, that my salute was an obeisance to his squireenship, as if forsooth I'd ever stoop to unbonnet to a cuif like him. So he

stared at me with an insolent puckering of his eyelids, and honoured my insignificance with the curtest of impudent nods, by way of acknowledging my kow-tow. That was too much for the first-born son of my mother to stomach, so I wheeled round on my heel with the red bluid i' my veins hottering like water bubbling in a pot when the fire is lowing beneath it. Miss Murray just then went into Lyons the draper's shop, and my lairdling gets strutting up and down like a rooster on his own midden, and swinging his cane, waiting for the end of her marketing. So I step right up to him, and remark very quietly—

“ ‘Mr. Kinnaird, my head is as good as yours, and perhaps a trifle better, and when I lift my bonnet your hat has to come off too!’ ”

“He looked dumfounded, and then blurted out something about insolence and impudence, with adjectives prefixed.

“I said nothing more, but just swept his head-gear into the gutter, by way of teaching him manners. He tried to cut me across the face with his cane, and he did. But next second it flew into flinders, and then it was fists on both sides. He was a man, four years older and thirty pounds heavier than I; but he was heavy and lubberly, and whisky-sodden, and I was lithe and limber as the best in those days. We hit out, and then I feinted, and dodged and caught him a right-hander under the chin, just on the apple of the throat. It lifted him off his legs, and landed him, frock-coat and all, atop of his tile in the slush. I didn't wait

for *her* to come out, but next time she met me she smiled in a way that told me she had heard all about it, and that I hadn't been crossed out of her good books in consequence thereof. Yes, my son, when a woman's involved, never put up with sauce! Hit out, clean and straight, and if there is to be any mercy shown to the other fellow, leave that part of the business to the Lord!

"Well, the second session came to an end, and I was in it again right up to the neck, with four firsts and a third, the latter of which was a slight miscarriage by reason of a raging toothache I had on the day of the exam. Folks told me I was as good as made (which I was half inclined to believe), and that I was a genius, which I knew, perfectly well was so much arrant bosh. But I wasn't fool enough to proclaim the source of my strength from the house-tops. Strength, did I say? I'd better have said weakness."

He paused, and his face darkled as if he had just raked up an evil memory.

"Yes!" he went on. "Weakness,—worse than womanly weakness! I was as good as made; therefore I was entitled to speak. And I did. Twelve pages of closely-written note-paper was the extent of the statement,—twelve pages of the hottest and intensest copy I ever threw off. I told her all,—the whole thing from the beginning, simply enough, without either beating round the bush or rodomontade. At least I didn't think it was rodomontade, it was all so unaffectedly genuine. I meant every word of it right up to the hilt. Now when I come to consider

the matter, as a piece of composition, it *may* have been a trifle over-florid.

"In a week I got an answer. 'Very much honoured, and highly flattered,' and all the rest of the formulæ that some months afterwards I discovered in the 'Lady's Complete Letter-Writer.' But she didn't promise 'to be a sister to me' in so many words, and so I didn't lose hope. Of course she didn't say 'yes'; but then, according to all I had read about women folks in story books, that wasn't quite their 'way under the circumstances. So I carried her letter about with me in an inside pocket, on the left of my waistcoat, and read it over twenty times a day, with thrills running all through me, when no one was near to see me playing the blooming idiot.

"In the vacation I was in the country, and saw her once or twice a month or two afterwards. She was wonderfully kind, although there was something in her manner now and then I couldn't quite understand. Sometimes I even got an uneasy suspicion that she was quizzing me; and once I was as sure as death that she was laughing at a matter that I thought very grave indeed. And a worshipper doesn't like to be made a mock of by the flashing-eyed goddess Athena, when he is so serious and devout in his adoration as I was. And day by day this uneasy feeling waxed apace.

"At last the crisis came, and its happening was on this wise. I used to go pulling with a mate of mine round by the old Castle on the cliffs. A devil he was to sit behind when he was in fettle, for he

had the style of a Hanlan and the stay of a Beach. I used to cook him by taking the stroke thwart, but that has nothing to do with the story. One evening we went out for a spin, and not far from the Castle-scaur we passed close in shore, just clearing the rocks with our feather. I saw some shells on the face of the cliffs I wanted to get, so I stepped out, and Daulton—that was my chum—sculled out into the open and left me. I saw a few other specimens on a ledge about thirty yards away, and I wanted to get them. Swim was the only way to reach it, so I stripped at once. I had just climbed up by the dulse and tangles when I heard the crunching of footsteps on the shingly beach round the ledge, and the murmur of voices, one of them a woman's. I crouched down where I was, waiting for them to pass, for folks there are more particular in the matter of clothes than they are in Japan, and I was arrayed in what was full dress in the Garden of Eden before the fall of sinful man. But pass they didn't. I heard a shuffling among the shingle, and recognised with holy horror that they had sat them down on a boulder. As I caught the tones of the lady's voice, my heart jumped up into my mouth, and I felt my person blushing all over, worse than if I had been caught eating pease with a knife. I heard her laugh a little mocking laugh, and an answer came to it in tones that made my ears tingle with anger. They belonged to Kinnaird. He was sacrilegiously familiar too, and called her 'Marian.' I wanted to knock him down; but although it is usual to strip for the ring, it doesn't do to be too much stripped in

the presence of ladies, and I just dug my nails into my palms by way of keeping my hands out of mischief. Then my ear caught a 'cheep' there was no mistaking. A cold sweat came out all over me. I was as furious as the Jews when the King of Syria sacrificed swine in the Temple: my idol was being smashed. It was a bitter moment. Then my own name was mentioned as the subject of a sentence where the predicate was most decidedly and pronouncedly uncomplimentary.

" 'Frank Webster,' she said in the dulcet tones that used to thrill me like a war-trump. 'George, dear,'—I felt as if I had been pithed—'you can't be so silly as to think that any girl could care a rush for that high-flown young fool. Only it's such fun, you know, to draw him on. It's as good as a play to listen to him mouthing and ranting about honour and duty, and all that nonsense. He'll not be able to support a wife for years, and if he were he would drive nine out of ten ladies crazy with his moonshine before the end of the honeymoon.'

"And again the soft, silvery laugh came floating round the crag, mockingly bitter.

"At last they rose, and I loosed my hold and dropped into the water. The current ran strong with an under-suction, and I felt much inclined to let it carry me down in its rush. But I didn't.

"When Daulton came to pick me up, he asked me if I had seen a ghost or a mermaid.

" 'Yes, a mermaid,' I said; '*... ut turpiter atrum Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne.*'

"I don't know how I got back, or what happened for the next few months. And then——"

Here there was a long pause; Webster's face was as lifeless and as lustreless as a lump of stale damper, or a heap of calcined chips that had once been *billets-doux*.

"Well, and then?" I at length queried, giving him a poke in the ribs by way of flapping his thoughts off the banks of the Acheron, where they had seemingly roosted.

"Oh, then!" he said with a start and a quiet, bitter laugh, "I just went to the devil. Not rampageously and with a racket, you know, but decently and in order. I meant to quit the country and everything therein at the end of the next session, and I just set to work to kill time meanwhile. I was what Homer calls *analkis*, utterly and thoroughly *analkis*. There was a powerful loosening of my moral and intellectual knees, and I just drove quietly onwards towards immortal smash. Drink? No! I wasn't built that way then, you see. I hadn't cut half my wisdom teeth at that age, and didn't know a tithe of the things that are good for sinful man. I hadn't learned to appreciate whisky then, and hated the very smell of it. No, it wasn't the other thing either. I just did nothing, or rather I allowed higher mathematics and physics to go to the devil, instead of wrestling with them like a man, as I ought to have done that session. I read snatches of Philosophy, and became a mild sort of Cyrenaic. And novels and romances, and all the literary pastry, and jam, and sponge-cakes, and the

rubbish generally that gives you incurable mental dyspepsia, I devoured till I was surfeited and scunnered. I sometimes looked back at the work that lay behind me, and wondered how the mischief I did it. Towards examination time I did try to pull up a bit and make up the leeway, but the stuff I did was as pithless and worthless as moist muck. I was no better than one of the gibbering, bloodless, fushionless shades in Hades. I felt that I had become a *thing*, a mere intellectual eunuch, and when a man feels that way the best he can do is to take a bucketful of prussic acid and invite his friends to the funeral. Well, the smash came, and it *was* a smash! A miserable last prize in one class, gulfed in another, and ploughed in the third. Ploughed, man, actually ploughed! Only think of it! Ploughed, man, ploughed! The First Bursar and First Prizeman utterly ploughed! The whole place rang with the deed of shame I had just wrought in Israel. Ow, man, but it was Marah-bitter to meet the pitying looks of mockery that shot me through and through, turn me whichever way I could. And the cackling sneers of triumphant noodles rang in my ears like the crackling of thorns under a pot."

He stopped again, and I noticed his fingers twitching nervously over the pipe stem.

"Ay," he went on, "I mind it all as if it had happened yesterday. • I was standing at the inner entrance of the Quad, with my shoulder against the wall and my bonnet plucked down over my brows. It wasn't to keep off the dazzle of the sun, 'cause I was standing in the shade; it was to—— On every

side in the sea of seething humanity I heard nothing but 'Webster, Webster, Webster,' and Webster's disgrace. One of the Profs. that had talked of me as the 'coming man' and a 'star' passed through, and he lowered upon me with anger and contempt. Man! that look irked me sore, and I felt as if salt had been rubbed into the raw.

"I was standing under the cage where the notices were pinned. For nothing better to do I looked up at them and began to read them mechanically. I went over them every one, with the letters all blurred and run together in my head, and never a notion of what they meant.* There was one small square of paper in the centre of the lot, and somehow I ever came back to that. After I had looked at it six times I began to have an idea of what it said. And then my soul began to work, and light came into my head, and a purpose began to form itself. As it grew and came from darkness into life, I felt my strength returning in full force, and I clenched my teeth and my hands in my pockets, and I straightened myself where I stood, and my back-bone again became stiff, and I swore I would do it or die. And of a sudden life leapt into my head once more, and I lifted it up and looked the best of them in the face unabashed, and began to bandy words with the bitterest of the mockers. And soon they saw that my tongue had again got its edge, and one by one they shifted out of reach of its rasp. I felt the blood tingling with lusty strength in all my veins, because I knew 'that the hair of my head had begun to grow after that it had been shaven.' It was the announcement of the

Balliol scholarship election that I had read, and I had purposed to be the man that was to be elected, or to burst myself like a shower of sky-flaring fireworks.

"The tussle was ten weeks off, and if I ever did a man's work it was that time. I went through my books as a sea of fire leaps through a stretch of six-foot grass, with a roaring autumn buster astern of it to give it a hoist ahead. A pretty face is all very well to dream about, but revenge is stronger fuel to keep the furnace aglow. Of course I don't mean the knife-in-the-back revenge of the coward; that's a sort of thing I know nothing about, and I don't want to make its acquaintance. But I had been down, and had been kicked,—and foully kicked too when I was down, and oh! it was luscious to think of what would be toward when I got on my pins again! But at the same time I kept quiet, and pretended to moon and to fool, and to drivel and to spend my days and my substance in doing what was worse than riotous sin—viz., in doing nix.

"Her? Oh yes! I met her, and she also had her peck at me. She tried to rub it in after the fashion of her sex. But I took it all mildly, as weak as a pitiful sheep. Then the next time she saw me coming she passed by on the other side; and one day when I called she was 'not at home.' But you see that did me good; I was already case-hardened and steeled, and that made me steelier still.

"One morning I disappeared, and neither man nor woman knew whither I had departed. It was then your honourable nose became acquainted with the backside of my sinister fist, and of course you

know the rest of it. Yes, it was a goodish bit of work, though I say it myself that shouldn't. But *those* were the days that were!

"Of course I came back splashed and spattered all over with glory and kudos. The Prof. that had glowered upon me as the archangels frown upon the damned wrote me a five-page letter of compliments and good advice. I took the compliments with a wink, and filed the good advice for future reference. You bet I made some of my quondam friends smell more than the scent of cayenne pepper seasoned with their own asafœtida. I don't think they ever tried that trick again. When I went back I discovered my undoing had been the making of me. I had got a lesson, a dour and bitter lesson; but I gave as good as I got, with possibly an allowance for unearned increment chucked in as boot to the bargain. No, no, my son, it doesn't do to turn the slapped cheek overmuch among ordinary folks. If you're hit, give the smiter room for repentance, and the biggest thrashing you can administer to help to furnish the chamber. Anyhow, I had got on the line once more, and I told myself quite cock-a-whoop-like that a petticoat would never derail me again."

"You ran pretty well as long as I knew you, I'm bound to say," I remarked.

"Ay, maybe. When you knew me I was a fairish man, I don't deny. But whisper! I could keep the length, I could keep the pace, I could put in work both from the leg and the off, *but all the same a lot of the devil had gone out of the bowling.* Iyah!

There's nothing like a pair of eyes that you might light your pipe at for putting spin into a man's work ! That I avow."

"And what did *she* say to you when you came back ?" I asked.

"Say ? Well, now, that's just where the odd thing came in. Three weeks before I went to Oxford there had been a regular financial crush in the country, and Kinnaird was in it up to his neck ! Of course she helped him out with her sympathy ! Not much ! She just left him to flounder and welter and lair in the mire, and wrote him with ink compounded of indifference and 30° of frost. When I came back she wrote me too ; such a sweet little note of congratulation, scented, and with sympathetic affection rustling in every fold of the dainty toned letter-paper. But I didn't wear my head under my arm any longer."

"Of course you answered ?" I ventured.

"In common politeness, I did. And I took the answer myself," he replied grimly. "Ay, I recall the last time I met her as clearly as if I saw the whole piece played down there now for the benefit of us twain."

He pointed to the swell below now ruffled by the darkling wind, and being kissed good-night by the sun's upper rim dropping behind the shoulder of Fuji.

"It was about the tail-end of afternoon tea when I lifted the knocker, and had the door opened for me by the hussy herself. And faith, it was well that there was nothing about the casings of my soul, 'cept cinders and chunks of scorixæ, and Dead Sea

fruity ashes, and dour and lifeless lumps and streaks of what had once been an erotic lava-torrent running and seething and raging, scorching Ætna-hot. If there had been anything in the shape of spiritual tinder about me, that look of hers would at once have licked it into a lowe. But there wasn't; my heart was icy and stony and steely, as void of sentiment as the scarred scalp of Shirane San is of verdure. The love that had dirled and thirled in every fibre of my being, from the top of my head to the tender Achilles, turning my emotion into one huge volume of poetry, and my brain into an intellectual dynamo, was as dead as a ring-barked gum-tree, or a blood-wood smitten by the levin-bolt. I saw her now as she was in the very flesh, with all the ideality washed out. For me she was no longer a Goddess, or an Alruna maiden at whose knee one might reverently bend one's head and draw in wisdom and inspiration and strength to strike the blows that only men can deal. She was now a woman, and nothing but a woman; what would make a gouty, old, leering, lecherous Major Penedennis put up his eye-glass and rap out between a dozen mess-room expletives, 'a d—d fine woman!' All that she was, and just that. There was the same firm litheness in her well-poised figure and her sculpturesque limbs, and the same fine scent in her Annie Laurie-like neck and bosom so coyly hidden beneath her lacy kerchief, but now to me she was but flesh, flesh, flesh, which God Almighty meant only to be kissed. And I had come sworn to kiss it, and then go my way. And I did."

"Was that square, do you think now, in cold blood?" I asked.

"Square! of course I do! It's but few folks that have done me scaith, and yet come off so easily as she did. That evening I had within me the courage that laughs. What's that, you ask? Well, there are several kinds of pluck, you see. First, there's the

" 'Courage of the Dorian mood,
 Such as raised
 To height of noblest temper heroes old
 Arming to battle, and instead of rage,
 Deliberate valour breathed, firm and unmoved,
 With dread of death to flight or foul retreat.'

That's the sort of, stuff that made Thermopylæ immortal, and the swads of the *Birkenhead* undying when they drew up on the quarter-deck for their funeral in the sharks' bellies. It's first. You know the chances are every jack one of them agin' you, and you've simply got to die with your company manners on, and a heavenly smile playing all over your ugly phiz. Then there's the dare-devil dash, when you throw yourself with a cheer upon odds twenty to one, and count upon coming out all right at the other side of the scrimmage, but yet are not *quite* cock-sure of doing the trick. That's number two. Then there's the case where you've all the trumps in your hand; the case where you've collared the bowling and have nothing to do but to wade in and slate, as cool as a cucumber and a ha! ha! of triumph struggling to escape from the downward side of your diaphragm, and only kept back by

a Christian consideration for the feelings of your enemies. That's the courage that laughs, my son. I've had it before I've got to the second round in the ring; I've had it before I've rowed a hundred strokes in the race. I've had it on the back of a buck-jumper, and I had it that evening, and, ah me, it *was* sweet; sweet as the forbidden fruit in Eden!"

"And possibly enough, like it, it turned to the dead-sea fruit of ashes in your mouth," I remarked.

"Maybe it did, and maybe it didn't. Well, I could see that this trip I was taken seriously, or in other words, like, a man. I never cared much for the insipid shallowness of drawing-room afternoon chat, but that time I splashed about in its tiny wavelets and ripples with the gusto of a brat in its bath after a cake of Pears' soap. My lady—we were alone of course—did make one or two breaks towards the sentimental, but I gave her no show. She opened her glorious eyes with mild astonishment as she seemed to realise the fact that by taking thought I had added more than a cubit to my stature since the last time we met. Then I was but lowly,—I had knelt at her knee. Now I had risen higher. I would throw my arm about her waist, and kiss her on the mouth! I saw that she read me as clearly as she could read print, and I don't think she was *very* much enraged, although she did seem a sort of trembling all over, and generally looked tense and tight, like the strings of a *koto* all ready for the thrumming of the player. 'Ah, ha! my fine lady,' think I to myself, 'there's been a sort of *ō-jishin* in the relationships between us twain. It's

not me, but you, that are the instrument now, and it's not you but me that am the performer, and by the Lord above I've a mind to play a tune upon the fibres of your soul that will make up for some of those disquieting discords you were kind enough to set a-jangling among the molecules of my mental and moral make-up!' But I didn't. It's mean to wreak a masculine revenge on silly and misguided females, and I let her down easy. So when she looked at me like a startled deer, and I saw she read me, I just laughed as a batsman laughs when he slogs the bowler to the chains for four and makes the winning hit, and I put my left arm round her waist,—by this time I had risen, and we were standing opposite to each other,—and with my right hand I drew her face down, down, down, towards my own, till her breath played fast and quick upon my cheeks, and her eyes grew soft, and her lips met mine in a long and clinging kiss, such as women-folks don't mean for mere make-believe, and her head sunk forward and rested on my shoulder as if the Lord Almighty had built it expressly for its permanent support. Then she looked up into my face and started. She saw it all,—they're quick, women are, in things like that, and she flushed all over red as the dying rays darting from behind Fuji's flanks there, and she covered her face with her hands, for by this time mine was set and hard.

“‘Yes!’ I said. ‘There is no use for words to this piece of music. You *made* me,—or rather you caused me to make myself, between which two things there's not perhaps any very great gulf fixed, and for

doing so I'm your debtor. But at the same time you did your best to send me straight to hell, and you've ruined my belief in women right to the beyond of forever. So we'll call the thing quits. Only you might have made an Excalibur of me, instead of the conscienceless curse of a Muramasa blade as which I'm bound to go forth into the world all along of the distemper you infused into the steel when it was a-forging."

"Stuff!" I remarked. "You never said anything of the kind to her! Why, what could she know of Muramasas? You might as well have rated the girl in Greek iambs."

"Well," he corrected, "it was words to that effect. You've no imagination. Anyhow, she understood my drift, and curtsied me out and said good-bye with a throaty sob that made me feel worse than a beast. The wind was sighing and moaning in the tree-tops as I went out through the old kirk-yard, and altogether I felt that life was a valley and existence a curse, and that there were some triumphs that ought to put your tail further down atween your hind legs than any drubbing you ever got."

"I'm glad to see there's that much grace left in you, old man," I said, by way of endorsing the sentiment.

He threw himself back flat on the gorse and clasped his hands behind his head, evidently rummaging in the dusty pigeon-holes of his memory. For three minutes nothing was heard but the mechanical puff, puff, puff of the dry smoke he was now enjoying, and the moanful sougning of the night breeze in the long waving grass around us. At last

he sprang up, and, knocking out the ashes from his cutty preparatory to stowing it away in its case, he meditatively observed—

“ ‘Tis queer how old scars will show even when you fancy time has closed them up for ever. It was at the Cape in ’83 that I met Alec Wilson, a townie of mine. Of course we went over all our friends. It was with a quaver that I asked after Marian Murray ?

“ ‘Dinna ye ken, mon ?’ he asked incredulously. ‘She married Rogers, of the Town and County Bank, four years ago, and has three fine bairns already. She’s a captain of the Gourdonshire Volunteers, for her man’s entirely under her thoomb, an’ it’s her that gies the orders. Lord, man, what’s the matter wi’ ye.’

“ I answered it was only a stitch in the side, and that I was subject to stitches. He recommended whisky, and I took it. I felt my hand shaking as I raised the glass to my lips.

“ Only imagine,—the mother of three children, and captain of a company of volunteers ! Now, why the devil did my heart go off that way, I’d like to ask ? Why, man, it was in my very mouth !

“ But come along, the launch is screeching for a start, and the petticoats are getting into the punt. Look out, my dear ! Your ankle’s very shapely, truly, but there is no real occasion to show so much of your silk stockings to the Professor !”

Webster jogged off down the hill, and I followed. Poor devil ! I little fancied that was about the last yarn I was to have with him. A fortnight afterwards we laid him in Yokohama Cemetery. It was his heart that gave way.

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FAUSTUS JUNIOR, PH.D.

AWAY back some six years ago Frank Webster was about one of the smartest pressmen in Japan. He is dead now and gone to—— Well, I shouldn't like to be over-dogmatic regarding his destination. He had his faults like other folks, but he had his good points too, and among them a rough-and-ready way of helping a lame dog over a stile was by no means the most insignificant; and he was not at all particular as to the sex or the colour of the claudicant canine either. He was withal a very tough subject indeed, generally in hot water, and thoroughly in his element when up to the armpits in mischief.

One day I chanced to be lounging on the verandah of the Hiogo Hotel watching the departure of the launch with the passengers for the outgoing French mail-boat, when I caught sight of Webster handing a lady on board with the air and style of a Louis Quatorze courtier. She was a fine creature, too; any one could see as much at a glance. I was considerably taken aback at the spectacle, inasmuch as I knew Mr. Frankie's circle of female acquaintances in the Treaty Port to be of a very circumscribed

circumference indeed. I began to wonder what mischief could be in the wind now, and went on to cast up the *pros* and *cons* of the probability of an elopement. After cogitating for the best part of an hour, and deciding that it was just possible that the community was to be treated to the luxury of a first-class scandal, I had my castle of cards all knocked into fragments by a forcible smack on the shoulder, and an invitation to come round to the office of the *Hiogo Intelligencer*. I went; there used to be some splendid stuff in the cupboard in the upstairs room.

"Now," began Frankie, "I know you're just dying to know all about it, and I'll tell you without any pumping. I've got a few minutes before the final revise comes up, so here goes. Light up!"

He pushed his cigar-box over after picking out a cheroot for himself. He then struck a match, and putting his feet on to the desk in front of him, tilted his chair back, till the centre of gravity was on the imminent brink of danger, and proceeded :—

I.

"Perhaps it was his abominable self-sufficiency that first set me against the little man. And, besides, he had the intellectual hall-mark of the Potsdam drill-sergeant stamped from top to basement all over him, and the aggressiveness of the Potsdam drill-sergeant is at once overwhelming and beastly. Also withal he was childish, and—— but it really serves

no earthly purpose to trot out all his drawbacks at the beginning of the yarn.

"It was on the trip from Hong-Kong to Yokohama that I first ran across him. When I got on board the boat at Kowloon I felt seedy; by the time we had got into the Formosa Strait I was filthily ill. *Mal de mer*? Nothing of the sort! Malaria, and a regular stiff dose of it at that. I caught it from sleeping a few nights in Tanjong Pagar Docks, where there is slime and garbage and ununderstandable evil smells galore, amply sufficient to furnish the *matériel* of a brand new Oriental Inferno. However, they—that is the passengers and the officers—all said it was seasickness. They were horribly unsympathetic, and this little beast was the most vicious in the whole crowd. They tried to poke fun at me and my shakes, and his clumsy maladroitness witticisms, in execrable English and in still more execrable taste, would have rasped the coarsest moral and mental fibre of the most pachydermatous Irish navvy that ever did the government stroke on a state railway line. It was no use thinking of knocking him down, for I was as weak as a female cat newly delivered of nine sightless kittens. And besides, even in that pithless and spineless condition I was really afraid of hurting him; for he looked fragile, fearfully and wonderfully fragile, reminding you for all the world of one of those gimcrack spindle-shanked chairs that cause you such qualms and trepidation when you pay your duty calls on certain old maids cursed with æsthetic moral twist. Not that he was lean and hungry-looking, or that he at all gave you the impression of being under-

fed. It wasn't anything of the sort that led you to bunch his *tout ensemble* with rickety and rococo furniture. For he was plump and rotund and sleek,—if you were at all inclined to be malicious and uncharitable, you might even say greasy. To state in so many words what was at the bottom of this seemingly far-fetched association of ideas would not be at all easy, yet the association in question was there undoubtedly,—strong, unmistakable, and permanent. Possibly enough it was his dumpy little feet and the slender understandings on which his squat and protuberant corporation found its support that were accountable for the mischief.

“But anyhow he was a nuisance. Yet on ship-board it does not do to be too captious; if the attempt at finding a soul of good in things evil has nothing else to recommend it, it occasionally serves to occupy you and to while away the time when you have used up all the other limited devices for getting through the heavy intervals between eating and sleeping on board an ocean-tramp. And on nearer acquaintance I found a lot of good in him. He was so amusing that between the round of shivers that made my poor existence a curse I laid myself out to study him, and to get at a workable chart of the cranklings and depths and shallows of his psychology.

“This undertaking was not a task of superhuman difficulty. It was as natural for the little man to make display of his mental garnishings and of his peculiarly strong points as it is for a peacock to spread out his tail on a sunshiny day, when the eyes of the admiring females are wide open to mark the

gorgeousness of his beauty spots. Strong points I think I remarked ; I ought to have said weak ones also and more especially.

"Schmoller Schmidt he called himself, and Ephraim was his Christian name. At least Ephraim stood before the double-barrelled surname on his pasteboard, but as to its being really and truly a baptismal title I have my doubts. It has an Old Testamenty Hebraic ring about it, and Mr. Schmidt sported the orthodox and conventional emblem of unmistakable Hebraic descent. The Mount Athos of a nose which supported the gold-rimmed spectacles through which his colourless eyes blinked and scintillated was eloquently Semitic ; not that I regard that as anything to be ashamed of. There is usually a good deal more than the normal 48 oz. of brains in the skull which lies to the rear of a protuberance of this peculiar cut, and the convolutions thereof are usually also of a complex and superior order. As a rule an olfactory organ like that of Mr. Schmoller Schmidt is the property of a man of a good deal more than moderate ability. And to give him his due, Mr. Schmidt along his own peculiar lines was no sawney.

"These lines, generally speaking, were Oriental literature, from Sanskrit and Pali down to Urdu and Hindostanee. But his peculiar weakness seemed to be 'chops.' It was his constant boast that he knew 40,000 of them, and his tallest brag that he had invented several original ideographs of his own,—ideographs, too, that were twisters to make out. For, as Mr. S. condescended pityingly

to explain, the especial merit of a 'chop' is its complexity and reconditeness. The supreme aim of a Chinese scholar, according to him, is to write something that nobody else is learned enough to read.

"But although flapping his wings and crowing most lustily on the ideographic dunghill he had made his own by a nine years' consumption of the midnight oil, he was not by any means given to hiding his light under a bushel when other topics came up for discussion. When people got sick of him and his Sinology, and felt a perverse but excusable desire to fall upon him and chivvy him from the smoking-room with cushions, he would at once climb down from the back of his hobby-horse and valiantly meet you on your own ground. No matter what it was you chose to talk about, you might safely count upon finding the Doctor,—he was a full-blown Ph.D. of Göttingen no less,—in the objective case. Painting, sculpture, architecture, finance, politics, sociology, and the proper way of making *sauerkraut*,—on each and all, and on everything else besides, he seemed to have 'ideas.' And he was not at all *ketchimbo* with them either; he 'parted' with them to all and sundry as a prodigal makes away with the hoardings of a millionaire father.

"He seemed to be as musical as the whiz of a musket-bullet, or the caterwauling of a cat; yet that did not prevent him from having 'notions' about Bach, and Handel, and Donizetti, and Wagner. He sadly shocked Miss Tomkins, our sole and only

first-class lady passenger, by declaring emphatically with a thump on the table that the tune of 'God shave de Queen' was fit only for the nursery. He was not even put to the rout when she suggested that it might also be appropriate in a barber's shop. That evening she confided to me later on that Mr. Schmidt was like a veritable barbed wire-fence or a well-greased football. Although I was very down in the mouth at the time with the shakes, I couldn't but laugh when she told me where the resemblance in question lay.

" 'You see, you can't sit upon him, and it's no use trying to,' said she, after hesitating a little, her words coming like the rush of a mob of stampeding cattle, as she caught up her skirts and fled. Miss Tomkins, in short, had but little love for him, and the ladies in the second cabin did not seem to have much more. But this did not appear to occasion the Doctor any great trouble. He always found ways and means to thaw the frigidity they occasionally endeavoured to assume for his benefit. He would attack them and their remarks at table in a way that inevitably set their blood on the boil and their indignation in a flame. It was useless for them to attempt to retaliate. Their *bête noire* was absolutely impervious to their pin-prick efforts at ridicule. As far as keeping the females of the second saloon in order, a model barn-door rooster could not possibly have done better in his feathered harem. Only one of the whole community contrived to give him any bother, and that was a squaky, tight-lacing sort of second cousin of his who was

travelling under his care, consigned to a petty Japanese official who had promised to endow her at the altar of Hymen with a legal and regular title to sew on the buttons that got adrift from his European garments. But even her squakiness and fireworks exhibitions of hysteria did not occasion her escort any very considerable amount of trouble and anxiety. When she did think fit to blow off steam, he looked angry enough, and muttered raspy, impolite things in hoch Deutsch and half-a-dozen other tongues; nevertheless, he always contrived to shunt the burden of her nervous disturbances on to the other ladies in the cabin, and above all on to the Doctor. For what was the use of paying for an *Arzt*, he argued, unless you got something out of him for your money? And as he himself was always so beastly well, in spite of his glass-this-side-up-with-care appearance, he was not at all sorry that some one connected with him should find occupation to keep Sawbones off talking philology, about which his ignorance was worse than crass.

“For the Doctor of Philosophy and the Doctor of Medicine had several times joined issue on the Origin of Language and the connection of the Indo-European with the Mongolian tongues. To a man who knew even but the outlines of the question the encounter was amusing. The combatants wanted badly to hit each other, but although they drove out lustily enough, their blows were all spent in thrashing the air. They seemed never to get into grip with each other at all. The Doctor of Physic was a heavy, ponderous, slow-witted giant, his putty-like

expressionless face all seamed with the scars of Schläger-cuts. Yet this philological war was not exactly a case of Goliath and David. It was rather a diverting exhibition of an elephant in a china-shop bent upon charging about promiscuously and at the same time smashing none of the crockery, and of an intelligent flea out for exercise, hopping and skipping about with an idea of putting a keenish edge on its appetite. Both performers were on the boards simultaneously, but the elephant did not tread upon the flea, nor did the flea think it worth while to operate on the hide of the elephant.

“‘But,’ Sawbones would ponderously declare, ‘Max Müller says——’

“‘Ah, Max Müller! He is a dear friend of mine. I have got such a nice letter from him! And one from Weber too. I——’

“‘Max Müller says,’ went on the Doctor still more decisively, without heeding the interruption, and laboriously sawing the air in front of him with his left hand to give point to his argument. ‘Max Müller says that the Chinese language——’

“‘Chinese language! Well, I think I know something about that: I know 40,000 characters, and I have invented several new ideographs of my own for electricity and other modern scientific terms.’ (The flea, it should be remarked, talked 199 to the elephant’s dozen.)

“‘That the Chinese language belongs to the Turanian family, and that’—the elephant proceeded.

“‘I tell you I know all about Chinese! I know 40,000 characters, and——’

“ ‘Any knowledge of Sanskrit can therefore be of no service to you for the acquisition of Chinese, belonging as it does to an——’

“ ‘But I don’t care for Max Müller. Professor Roth gave me a beautiful copy of the Mahabharata. It cost three hundred mark—three hundred mark, mein Herr ; just think of that sum for a minute, and realise what it means. I was his favourite pupil.’

“ ‘——entirely different stem. Therefore the man who knows Sanskrit well is likely enough——’

“ ‘Sanskrit ! Of course I know Sanskrit ! Didn’t Professor Roth give me a three hundred mark—a——*three hundred mark* copy of the Mahabharata ! I was his favourite pupil——’

“ ‘——to be entirely ignorant of Chinese.’

“ Here the Doctor of Philosophy would start up in wrath and dudgeon, and hurl contemptuous and semi-abusive epithets at the head of the *Doctor Medicinæ*. Then he would rush off in a rage to the second cabin, where things would be uncomfortably sultry for the next half-hour. Meanwhile the Doctor would turn round and confide to me the fact that Dr. Schmidt was a conceited puppy. A quarter of an hour later Schmidt would meet me and take me aside to impart to me the secret that the Doctor was utterly guiltless of any knowledge of Comparative Philology. I was, and still am inclined to believe that both were equally veracious.

“ Of course there is a slight touch of caricature in the dialogue given above. But only really a very slight touch. The exaggeration is after all infinitesimal. When Dr. Schmoller Schmidt’s conceit

did get a show, it spouted like a veritable Artesian well.

"One evening he came aft and informed the first-class passengers in a body that in one respect he was the most valuable man in the East. When we expressed our scepticism by a mild elevation of the eyebrows, and looked inquiringly for further particulars, he went on to inform us that a translation of the works of certain Chinese sages would be simply a boon beyond price for the West, and that only a man with a peculiar combination of very rare qualifications could undertake the task. These qualifications were in the first place a knowledge of antediluvian Kanji, and in the second the inspiration of the Pierian maidens.

" 'Now,' he went on, 'I know old Chinese ; no one can deny *that*. And I am also a poet !'

"Stood him ? Of course I did ! He was so infinitely amusing. Miss Tomkins *did* go and look over the taffrail, when, with his thumbs in the arm-pits of his waistcoat, and what a respected Hibernian friend of mine would call the 'shtrut av an am'rous paycock,' he publicly proclaimed himself the child of the Muses. But then Miss Tomkins had a fine and delicate nervous organisation, being highly sensitive to smells of all sorts.

"Just about this time he thought fit and proper to honour my insignificance with his attention. I fancied it was, firstly, because I submitted to his teasing me about sea-sickness ; secondly, because I listened to him ; and thirdly, because other people had got tired of him, and wouldn't. Anyhow,

inflict himself upon me he did. On closer acquaintance I found him to have a lot of good points. If he was communicative to a fault, he was not at all inquisitive. He sketched out his future career in the Empire of Dai-Nippon for my especial benefit. He meant to attach himself to the Legation in the capital; his knowledge of Chinese would be found simply invaluable by the Minister. In that line he was sure he had no rival in the country, and from Secretary of Legation to Minister was not after all such a far cry. And of course it was in accordance with the traditions of the nation to have scholars and *savants* as its representatives at Foreign Courts. Was not Niebuhr once Prussian Minister at Rome, and was not Bunſen Ambassador to St. James's?

“‘And,’ he would wind up, ‘I know more Sanskrit than Bunsen did, and neither Niebuhr nor Bunsen knew Chinese at all, and I have got a thorough grip upon it. I know 40,000 characters, and besides I have invented some new ideographs of my own. Yes, my chances are brilliant, very brilliant. And besides, you know German influence is now becoming paramount in the East, and you may be sure it will not suffer in my hands.’

“During all this time, to do him justice, he never pestered me with impertinent questions. He took me entirely on trust, a thing for which I was duly grateful, inasmuch as I do heartily detest being bailed up with, ‘Who?’ ‘Whence?’ ‘Whither?’ and ‘How old?’ No! In that respect at least he was a gentleman right to the tips of his finger nails. If you knew how to manage him he was a delightful

companion. Only remove the spigot from his brewer's vat of self-conceit and stand clear, and you had an entertainment fit for the gods. The flood then flowed out and on and on in a full and clear and refreshing stream. It is true that its odour was occasionally a trifle pungent, but that did not matter much to a citizen of the world.

"I don't know how it was, or what suggested it,—perhaps it was his thin-cut, flexible, mobile lips, with their covering of down just struggling into sunlight,—I don't know what it was, but one day I found my head ringing with Mephistopheles' *Du übersinnlicher sinnlicher Freier*, as I sat looking at him. I couldn't help laughing at the idea after a minute's reflection. No! no! his weakness could not possibly lie in that direction. In spite of the fits of poetic frenzy to which he professed to be addicted, he was altogether too dry and passionless to ever err after the fashion of King David, or of Solomon, or of Faust. Besides, he was too much wrapped up in his own sublime personality. I put away the notion as utterly ridiculous and idiotic. And yet, but for that notion, it is extremely unlikely that Dr. Ephraim Schmoller Schmidt would ever have figured as the hero of this most veracious recital. The notion in question was one of those quick, intuitive glances into the raw of character that come goodness only knows whence. It is only years afterwards that I realise the truth of it.

"During the last two days of the voyage I was utterly downed by my enemy. I had to keep below, and consequently saw nothing of my fellow-passengers till I staggered up on deck with the idea of getting

ashore. And even then it was only a sort of misty dissolving view that I got of Dr. Schmidt. He was sitting on athwart of a rocking sampan with his back towards me, and as he disappeared in the raw and rolling fog of the morning I found myself thinking of the Lord passing before Moses in the clefts of Sinai.

"When I got on land I felt as if I had fallen into the lowest depths of Purgatory, with the chances all in favour of the bottom giving way and dropping me into real live 'raging hell-fire. I fled for refuge to the nearest hospital, where I spent a solid fortnight spread out on the flat of my back.' But of course that has nothing to do with the story.

"Thus it came to pass that I saw nothing of Dr. Ephraim for the best part of a month. One day I was returning from Kyoto,—I had gone up there after I had fled Lot-like from the hospital,—when who should flop himself down beside me in the *chuto* railway-carriage I was in but Dr. Schmoller Schmidt. He at once opened fire. To begin with, all unrequested, he discharged a broadside of autobiography. The rapidity of incident was staggering. The number of literary suns and planets native and foreign, male and female, that had taken to revolving round Dr. Schmidt within the space of one short moon was bewildering and overpowering. One could surely be forgiven for cherishing an uneasy suspicion that his system was essentially Ptolemaic; also for believing in the possibility of the appearance of some brute of a Copernicus unfeeling enough to demonstrate that the earth—*i.e.*, Dr. Ephraim Schmoller

Schmidt—was not the mainspring of the local social system after all. For, as you know, almost every community is cursed with the existence of at least one of those awful individuals whose fad is a perpetual quest after 'Teruth'—the naked 'Teruth,' and of course spelled with a capital T. They are bitter, bitter *kusuri* for self-complacency,—bitter as quinine. But they are useful in helping to wrestle with the malaria of over-weening self-sufficiency and conceit, and so far as effective in this direction they must be regarded in the light of public benefactors.

"When I asked him about his appointment at the Legation, however, he deftly changed the subject. This I took to be an indication of the discovery on his part of what I was aware of all along; I mean the fact that there is never any lack of men of first-class sterling ability in the German Embassies. Bismarck knows better than to send mere fools and figure-heads abroad to make the Eagle a laughing-stock. And as at present, so away back in the early 'eighties,' the *personnel* of the Kaiserliche Deutsche Gesandtschaft in Japan was full chock-a-block with linguistic talent of all kinds. It struck me that it had begun to dawn on Dr. Ephraim that he did not by any means hold a monopoly of 'chops.'

"At the same time, though, he thought fit to wither me with a glance of contemptuous pity when his eye lighted on the leaflet of 'Japanese Words and Phrases' I was then valiantly but hopelessly wrestling with.

"'Lend me that thing for a moment, will you?'

he said brusquely; 'I want to see when the train returns.'

"I ought to mention—but perhaps you know—that friend Willoughby's 'Vocabulary' is adorned rearwards with a railway time-table. He looked at it for the best part of two minutes perhaps, with his occipital muscles puckered into a judicial frown, and then returned it with a scornful 'So.'

"'I don't want to see the time-table any more,' he remarked airily. 'It is quite easy. I see the plan, and I memorise the whole thing in a few seconds. A wissenschaftliches methode of doing vork and a good memory save much troubles.'

"His eyes blinkingly challenged my wonder and admiration through his spectacles, and I did look at him with wonder, and I was going to say admiration, but that would not be true. He then went on to tell me what the mission of the great German Empire was. In the first place it was to be *selbstständig*, utterly independent of any Dreibund whatsoever. It was to crush France; it was to humiliate Russia, and it was to keep Austria, Italy, and His Holiness the Pope in leading strings. This was amusing enough, but when he went on to say that England and English influence were everywhere to be wiped from the political and industrial chess-board, I got a bit irritated.

"'Here, in Japan, the English einfluss is becoming gar nichts. The Japanese do not love you Engländer. Their army is on the German model, their commerce will be on the German model, and everytink else also will be German. Everytink,

everytink, I tell you, will fall into the hands of the Germans.'

"I asked where the cars we were riding in were made.

" 'Why, in Germany of course, and the engines too.'

"That was a lie, but I didn't say so.

"The Japanese were at the beginning of that virulent attack of 'German measles' they suffered so badly from some two or three years ago, but they were not quite so far gone in their craze as to import all their railway rolling-stock from Deutschland.

"A few minutes after this we reached Kobe Railway Station, and the multitudinous patter of hundreds of pairs of clattering *geta* sounded a relief to the drums of my ears. The Doctor said a brusque good-bye and summarily elbowed a way for his shabby brown overcoat through the crowd to the turnstile. I caught sight of his little round hat angrily battling onwards amidst a jabbling sea of bobbing shoulders, and from that day to this I have never once set eyes upon his phiz.

II.

"What has all this to do with the yarn about that girl? Just hold your whisht and we'll come to that in good time enough. You're so unduly impetuous, —just like a bloomin' globe-trotter trying to outfly the swallows, or to break the telegraph record, or to do six mountains, twenty-four waterfalls, thirty-six temples, and a hotel all in one day. You've not the

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ghost of an idea of artistic development. Telling a story, man, is like courting a woman; you must lead up to the critical point by degrees. *In medias res*, you say. Bosh! Into a muddling mess, you mean! No! no! Take the straight modern tip and begin at the beginning and advance *go yururi* to, and you'll get there all right and easy.

"But where was I? Oh, yes! Well, I did Japan, and then I had to walk off as 'special' to an expedition that meant to cross New Guinea. Got over! No! I got wounded, and pretty nearly qualified as the last scion of an ancient and an honourable house. A brute of a nigger sent a poisoned arrow whizzing through between my legs about ten inches above the knee. Yes. I *have* long thigh-bones, and it's deucedly lucky. After that I was sent to write up sugar and cotton in the Southern States, and then I struck these lovely and enchanting shores for a second time, where among other things I have to run the *Hiogo Intelligencer*. Tired of it, do you ask? In the words of my Hibernian boss, 'It's mesilf that's outrajisly sick of it.' But it has its good points, but that's neither here nor there.

"You know my mate, Rossignol, don't you? Of course you do. Let me tell you, then, that you know a real live man, and not a creeping, crawly, slimy thing that has succeeded in getting upon its hind legs and obtaining tick at the tailors. He got me out of a tight fix when I was 'special' for the *New York Sun* in Tunis,—in 1880 I think it was, or perhaps 1881. It was at Kairwan,—but that's not exactly to the purpose at present.

"Well, a few weeks ago he hinted to me he had something in hand, and asked if I would help to see him through with it. He told me the argument of the piece as we bowled along to Osaka like a snail out for a holiday at his mother-in-law's funeral.

"'You see I'm a married man now, and it won't do for me to go vexing the wife. So you've got to do duenna for me. And mind, above all things you're not to contradict me when I say you don't speak French.'

"I remarked that it would need a bigger lie than that to make me call out that he was an unblushing untruth-teller,—especially in ladies' company. For by that same token the French I do patter is a sort of cross between Joseph's coat and the structure of the Psalmist's body,—it is a patchwork of many colours fearfully and wonderfully put together.

"We got out at Osaka railway station, and after half-an-hour's navigation in *bashas* and *kurumas* we found ourselves in the outskirts of the Vanity Fair of the Venice of the Orient. We plunged into it, and after threading the mazes and alley-ways of its back-slums we at last fetched up with the casine-like Theatres of the Dotombori looming in front of us as a landmark. The neighbourhood was poor; the houses were low and flimsy, and we expected a general epidemic of dinginess and dirt and squalor, but we didn't stumble across it. An aggressive and irritating odour of respectability pervaded the locality, and the narrow alley-way into which we were finally directed especially so.

"We went hunting around inspecting the miniature perpendicular 'name' cards over the doorways like a pair of sleuth-hounds on the scent for a breakfast.

"'Hallo! Here we are!' I said as my eye caught one particular tablet adorned with a scrabble of European pot-hooks in lieu of the undecipherable contortions of Japanese hieroglyphics; '*Mademoiselle Louise Balbi*.' Now then, let us fix our neck-ties and prepare for the enemy. You first, please!"

"We were disappointed; not at home! At least that was the sum and substance of the information we contrived to rescue from the weltering flood of honorifics that poured from the black-toothed ball of humble politeness vigorously polishing the *tatami* (mats) with her forehead in our honour.

"'But if any honourable foreign visitors should arrive in the honourable absence of Louise Sama, would the honourable visitors condescend to honourably do an honourable hanging of their honourable loins in this poor and unworthy dwelling till she returned? Before five o'clock her august return certainly and positively would be.'

"We held a hurried council of war, and decided to consume half-an-hour in exploring the neighbouring Alsatia.

"'Funny,' remarked Rossignol, who had got a peep through the *shoji*. 'She can't be so far on her beam-ends as I fancied. She told me in the train that she had nothing to eat, and that she was living in a den. Humph! the den seems to be rather a sumptuous retreat. Carpets, chairs, tables,

books, and I don't know what not. It seems it doesn't do to take things too literally when it's a young and pretty woman that's your informant.'

"We set out and fetched a compass round the shows and sights of the locality. When we got back, we found that Mademoiselle Louise had become infected with Japanese notions of punctuality. Five o'clock had come, but the object of our pilgrimage hadn't. So we accepted the invitation of the painfully humble doorkeeper to step in and 'do a hanging of our honourable loins.'

"We had expected to enter a hovel; we found ourselves in a fairly drawing-room. The room was an ordinary six-mat Japanese *zashiki*,—only something had been done to it that eliminated its 'Japaneseness' almost entirely. A plain carpet and a rug or two upon the floor, a table sizeable enough for the first-cabin of Noah's Ark, half-a-dozen or so old high-backed chairs ribbed with fretwork,—they might have come out of a mediæval Norman chateau,—were something to begin with. But they were responsible for only part, and the least part too, of the effect. It was the trinkets on the table, the photographs and prints round the walls, and, above all, the fine array of volumes in an alcove, that gave one the notion of a Parisian boudoir in which artistically-painted Japanese *shojis* counted for one feature among the freaks that go to make up the furnishings of a female æsthete's withdrawing chamber.

" 'What the deuce!' muttered Rossignol, starting up and passing across the room at two seven-leagued

strides, 'what the deuce is the meaning of this gun? That fishing-rod I can understand; it may have been a present from a Japanese, or she may have bought it for ten *sen*,—but this gun! Let me see!' he went on, taking it down from the peg on which the weapon was strapped. 'By the living Jehoshaphat! it is no toy, as I fancied it might be, but a real live death-dealing chassepot!'

"He stood with the thing balanced in his hands in helpless perplexity. Then he thrust it back into its canvas case, with his forehead puckered into furrowy wrinkles.

" 'These riding-whips, too,'—he proceeded to himself, shaking his head sapiently. 'And this photo!'

" 'Well, I do declare! If it isn't the hussy herself! Whew-ew-ew!' he exclaimed, holding out the cabinet-size to me, and looking just as if some one had tilted him on to his wrong end by mistake. The group was an interesting one. *Imprimis* a horse and a dog—the dog crouching on the ground and curled up, blinking in the acme of comfort, while a fine high-stepper of a steed had the graceful lines of his curving neck beautifully brought out by the position he had been forced to assume. His head came over the shoulder of a young cavalier in close-fitting double-breasted jacket, tight riding-breeches, and Hessians coming up almost to the knee, with enormous spurs on the heels. The left arm was thrown caressingly over the beast's glossy, sheeny neck, and the uncovered, close-cropped head was thrown back upon the animal's near shoulder.

The most prominent feature in the landscape, however, was a moustache that curled with all the bristliness and ardour of a grenadier in the lists of war or of love, and meaning business.

“ ‘Well, if that is not a man, it is a wonderfully good imitation of one,’ said I.

“ ‘An imitation it is, my son,’ returned Rossignol. ‘The woman that marries that man will wed neither a bachelor nor a widower, nor will she be the means of driving a Benedict into bigamy. That’s Mademoiselle Louise Balbi herself in the very flesh—and a pair of riding-breeches.’

“ It struck me that we were in for an adventure ; only the protagonist in the piece was deucedly slow in coming on. To while away the wait I took to overhauling the books in the alcove by way of a substitute for an overture from the orchestra.

“ They were a fine lot tastefully bound in black, almost as enticing in their way as a widow of four-and-twenty in her weeds. De Musset, Béranger, La Fontaine jostled with Voltaire and the Contrat Social, while La Sainte Bible lay cheek by chowl with that most scandalous and unholy production, *Les Contes de Boccace*. Atop of the neatly-packed and labelled array lay bundles of files of old *Figaros*, so trimly and tidily folded and arranged that no creature with a real indefeasible title to the use of male accoutrements could ever have been guilty of putting them there. Let Mademoiselle Louise ride like a trooper as much as ever she chose to, she had evidently not unsexed herself in the matter of that delightful female sense of order and tidiness

which, like a low voice, is such an excellent thing in woman.

“However, time went on, and we were getting to the end of our patience and our resources. It was now well on towards six, and we had got up to go when the landlord and his spouse appeared, and, flopping down on their heels, began to polish the *tatami* with their foreheads, *Gomen-nas-ai-ing*, and requesting the honourable guests to do an honourable waiting for still a little longer.

“‘Now, just watch the performance of these d—d fools,’ blurted out Rossignol with impatience. ‘Let’s listen to the duet; perhaps they’ll tell the truth by accident.’

“In the confusion of the pelting hail-storm of honorifics that rained upon us we had a lot of difficulty in pulling the narrative straight, or in fact in getting any glimmering of sense to emerge at all. So we requested one of the parties to shut up, and asked the other to proceed without an accompaniment. The male marionette, blear-eyed and close-cropped, then continued his parable,—he kept on picking fibres from the matting all the time, and looking at them for inspiration,—and told us that Louise Sama went out every Sunday afternoon to put flowers on the tombstone of a little girl that had died some time ago, and that ordinarily she got back by five o’clock. ‘To-day, because I am sick with sore eyes, I did not draw her *kuruma*, and therefore she took another *kuruma-ya*, and therefore she will be a little late perhaps,’ etc., etc., etc.

“‘Humph,’ said Rossignol, ‘I see how the land

lies. She's in debt, and these cattle scent money in our visit, and the smell of hard cash is very sweet to their nostrils at this New Year's time.'

"We could wait no longer, and so we fared forth into the shades of night and the smells of the street, accompanied by him of the blear-eyes, who kept running and peering about into the darkness like a hound on the scent. He was in a great state lest we should escape.

"We had got about three hundred yards on our way when there was a thundering clatter of *geta* and flying pebbles, and a whirlwind of streaming Japanese garments fell upon our rear with a volley of '*kima-shita, kimashita, kimashita!*'

"We turned round, and had almost reached the house again, when a patch of white bounded out of the darkness with a joyous exclamation.

" 'Ah, vous êtes venu !'

" 'Oui, comment va-t-il ? Etes-vous gentil ?'

" 'Ah ! oui, et vous ?'

"And so on, and so on, till Rossignol was forcibly whisked into the boudoir. I stood outside in the cold with my nose all out of joint till philosophy came to my aid with a reminder that in this affair I was to be merely a *kōphon prosōpon*, and not even a second fiddle.

"At last Rossy thought fit to shout to me to come in. I was introduced as being utterly guiltless of understanding *Parlez-vous*, which was a lie, and as *mon ami inséparable*, which is true enough when there is a row on, or as long as there is any liquor about.

"I looked at the photograph on the wall and then at the original. Barring the moustaches, the breeches, and the top-boots, the likeness was a good one. The jacket was the same in both instances; now somewhat old and worn and frayed, yet neat and tidy withal. It was open below the throat, where a huge white starched breast-plate with a single stud in it harmonised perfectly with the pallor of the face above it. It was a young face, possibly twenty-three or twenty-four years of age at the outside,—but experience, if not time, had begun to scrabble a history upon its lineaments. The brow was low and broad; the large watery eyes were set widely apart; the mouth was big and prominent, with thin lips that occasionally shut with a snap of determination over two gleaming rows of teeth that had evidently never called for the kind offices of the dentist. The ears were small, and sat like a pair of pearl shells well back from the cheek-bones. In ordinary circumstances it would have been a witching face,—it would be a powerful one under any conditions,—but now it was pinched and haggard, and when certain reminiscences were called up, wolfish. But when she smiled,—and Rossy can hold up his end of the log with any man in tickling a woman's face into ripples,—the creases disappeared and the wrinkles vanished as if by magic, and the conviction forced itself upon you that despite its sizeableness, nature had meant that mouth for kissing. But when a woman has come down to the business of keeping her immortal soul in touch with her body on Japanese food and less than nothing a month,

you can readily fancy that her physical charms are apt to take flight with her impedimenta generally.

“By the time I had made this exhaustive diagnosis Rossy had got her to talk—mostly for my benefit, he said. At first it was a mere recital of what I knew already. She had been young and foolish once on a time like more of us, and her especial foolishness had consisted in coming a cropper, and bolting with a Japanese merchant, on the understanding that he was to marry her when they got to Dai-Nippon. However, on landing *Akindo-san* owned up to being already more than sufficiently ‘wived’; he had already one lawfully wedded spouse, besides a female subaltern or two to aid her in ‘manning,’ or rather in ‘womanning,’ the *ménage*. There was a quandary!

“‘What was a poor girl to do?’ asked Mademoiselle Louise, plaintively and piteously. ‘One must live somehow.’

“Of course in a way she was right. Lucretias are all very well in Roman history and story-books, but they are not so very plentiful in real life. They are grand women,—fit to be the mothers of heroes; but we don’t raise many of them nowadays, more’s the pity.

“However, Mademoiselle did not knuckle down with any considerable amount of grace to a junior command in the household of Okura Sama. She didn’t like raw fish, she didn’t like *daikon*, she didn’t like having to put her head on the *tatami* in honour of her lord and master, and she hated to play something even lower than second fiddle. So

one day she arose in her wrath and addressed Okura-san in forcible language, and with the back-edge of a Japanese sword. Okura Sama appeared to understand the hint, and henceforth left her severely alone. In a few weeks he even went so far as to beseech her in the name of the 8,000,000 gods of Dai-Nippon, to honourably withdraw herself from his humble dwelling, and to restore peace to his insignificant household. Acting on the advice of an old and fatherly compatriot of her own, she complied with his request,—for a consideration. Then paterfamilias tried to work a little scheme of his own at her expense, and succeeded. When he had got what he wanted, he advised her to go into a convent. Then when she remonstrated against this proposal in dignified but forcible language, by a piece of brilliant diplomacy he shunted her on to some one else,—a high and mighty but under-paid official in the consular service of a certain mighty nation. But I'm going to skip all this and the next few scenes in the drama.

“Let it suffice to say that the girl tried and tried again to get out of it and back to Paris; but do all she could, as our Japanese friends put it classically, it was ‘no go.’ You see, it was for the supposed interest of certain parties that she should stay. And the sum of the whole matter was that at the moment of our appearing on the scene she was badly in debt, with her credit all gone, the New Year approaching, and a yelping rabble of petty merchants now bowing and scraping, now snarling and growling, for the money which she had not.

“‘In three more days they will turn me into the street,’ she said; ‘and from here to the Yoshiwara over yonder is a very easy passage. How much do you fancy I should fetch? A foreign woman will be a variety, quite a *mezurashi-mono*. The Japanese, I’m told, have paid as much as \$1000 for a rabbit; surely I am worth as much as a rabbit!’

“‘Marah itself would have been sweetness compared to the intonation of this deliverance.

“‘I have been *trompé, trompé*, by everybody,’ she said. ‘There was Dr. Schmoller Schmidt, a Professor in the Foreign Language School; surely you would expect a Professor to be *un homme honorable*; he has deceived me worse than any.’

“‘At this I pricked up my ears! I thought of that voyage from Hong-Kong, and of Mephistopheles’ *übersinnlicher, sinnlicher Freier*, once again. Could there be anything in it after all? I listened to this chapter of her story, and I found there was a lot.

III.

“The acquaintance began in the Kōenchi, or public garden. A friend of Mademoiselle Louise had become infected with a craze for the study of green stuff, and Louise had gone out with her to help in prospecting for specimens thereof. Among them they ran across Dr. Ephraim Schmoller Schmidt, although he turned out to be less verdant than he seemed at first blush. For he really could blush like a mawkish school-girl in the shivers of her first love-affair, when it suited his book to do so. And it

happened to be handy for him to indulge in the performance at that moment, and accordingly he blushed all over, a ruddy ruby red. It became him very well, Mademoiselle assured us,—he looked for all the world like a naughty little cherub caught in *déshabillé* without his wings, and very much put out because he had forgot them. On that occasion he had proved punctiliously polite, and *dévoué*, very much *dévoué* indeed. His gallantry was apiece with that of Raleigh dabbing his best go-to-meeting cloak in the mud for the honour and glory and comfort and good-will of Queen Bess, or eke of old Dizzy putting a Cashmere wrap round the Imperial shoulders of Her Gracious, and murmuring amiable nothings in her ears all the time. Dr. Schmidt could be sentimental and overpoweringly complimentary to ladies in seven or eight different languages, without counting in any of his 40,000 chops.

“So Louise was mildly pleased—not carried off her feet though by any means—by his style to begin with. She was very careful to make the above distinction. ‘Fall in love? No! Certainly not; that nonsense did not pay. Even then she had been over much fooled by men. But that she liked him—*Mais oui! certainement.* And as for warmer feelings afterwards? *C’était possible.*’

“As she said this she shrugged her shoulders the tiniest little bit, and stared dreamily into vacancy, or the bottom of Rossy’s hat, which lay tilted on its side on the far end of the table.

“Dr. Schmidt had found out her address, and had called. He had found her reading Alfred de Musset,

and he at once rushed upon her, and, metaphorically speaking, embraced her as a sympathetic soul; for he also was a poet. 'Moi aussi mademoiselle. Je vous l'assure, je suis poète!'

"I thought the declaration sounded even better in French than it did in guttural German. On board the ocean-tramp it had been 'Ich bin Dichter.' But somehow—possibly because it was messed up with Chinese chops on that occasion—the romance of the previous assertion of Pierian inspiration was very much *manqué* compared with the glamour of the episode as related by Mademoiselle Louise. But Chinese 'chops,' and De Musset! and the vast gulf fixed there between! And then,—well, he could have had no ulterior designs to work upon me,—an old tough, leather-skinned, case-hardened lump of male journalistic iniquity, but, as the sequel showed in the case of Louise, he meant the metaphorical embrace to become something more substantial and satisfying than a mere empty and stilted *façon de parler*. Kindred souls and Platonic affection are no doubt very fine as garnishings, but after all they only serve for dessert. Man cannot live by them alone, any more than he can depend upon the baker exclusively for his support. They are just like the *saké* that preludes a Japanese *gochisō*, or the cocktail you take at the bar to put an edge on before you enter the dining-room at the Club.

"And that was just how Dr. Ephraim Schmoller Schmidt meant to engineer the business, and just the way he succeeded in running it. He said he was very lonely living the bachelor life he did.

Mademoiselle Louise said she was very sorry to hear it, and the Doctor then invited her up to lunch with him. She accepted the invitation, and found the luncheon a gorgeous affair. She confessed to doing justice to it, while the Doctor also tendered it all due respect. It had a most expansive effect upon him. He began to talk in verse,—in verse with a measure that was erratic and a flavour that was most pronouncedly erotic. It was a trifle embarrassing,—especially so when he went on to inform his guest in a hexameter line with a very halting foot or two, that she was the very image of the girl to whom he had been engaged! Now although the bloom may have been all rubbed off the peach ages ago, no woman likes to be addressed in this style. A mere reflected passion is hardly a complimentary thing, even allowing that the original was not a cheap Brummagem concern with maudlin mawkishness as the only conspicuous feature about it. And to be honoured with a declaration that one is the cause of a dead-and-alive stirring among the drossy cinders of the calcined brass of an extinct calf-love,—well, it makes a woman's cheeks flush with the sense of Power!

“Here she broke into a little scornful laugh, and then trilled out a *chansonnette* quivering with sarcasm for our benefit. I wished Dr. S. had been listening.

“One can imagine what a fine theme this would have been for Euripides! The vengeance of Aphrodite far transcending Juno's pale and spiteful pin-pricks on account of *spretæ injuria formæ* would have been a tragedy out-tragedying the peripeteia

of the *Bacchæ*! But when Aphrodite is going around with an empty stomach, as she occasionally has to in these days of a glutted labour market, she must think of other considerations before mounting the broomstick of a witch's whirlwind of fury and revenge. She has perforce to bite her lips and knuckle down to tackling the purely mundane and barren problem of making ends meet,—not an easy one by any means when the *res angustæ domi* have shrunk so badly and lost so much of their elasticity as they had with Mademoiselle Louise. So although she didn't like the compliment, she laughed with the wrong side of her face, and pocketed the slight on the off-chance that she would be able to fill the vacuum with something more tangible and substantial by-and-by.

"Possibly it was only his own patent poetic way of conducting operations; yet Mademoiselle confessed to finding herself in a state of hot and deadly siege before she could very well say how it was done. The Doctor had used the old love simply as a cover to his approaches. When he fancied he had finished his trenches and got all his batteries in position, he threw off the mask and opened fire with vigour. He began by saying some things about the old flame that were not over complimentary, and some things about the new one that were. He addressed the latter in language that bore a close resemblance to the warmest-tinted portions of the song of Solomon. He went on his knees *et fit un déclaration d'amour*. It was slightly embarrassing, Mademoiselle admitted, because in the first place his clothing was so tight

about the knees that the position looked uncomfortable, and perhaps a trifle ridiculous, and in the second place because she was almost beginning to believe in his sincerity. In Japanese phrase she was 'puzzled.'

" 'Eh, bien! Puis alors!' —

"There she shrugged her shoulders again, and threw out her left hand sideways, palm upwards, with her cigarette between the fore and middle fingers, and raised her eyebrows in a way that conveyed as much as an ordinary half-dozen chapters in a three-volume novel.

"Of course, when a woman *hésitâtes*, she is lost. Only Louise asked for something definite and tangible. The Doctor delicately insinuated that he was poor but honest, and went on to say that he had expectations. In that he was not at all singular; most folks have, the victims of the Manilla gamble included. The Doctor's, though, had so many probabilities in their favour that they were in his own sanguine opinion within an arm's length of certainty. One of his compatriots was on the point of returning to the Vaterland, and the plot was to jockey Mr. Schmidt into his vacant 300 *yen per mensem* billet.

" 'And then——'

"There the Doctor stopped with a rising intonation, gazed ceiling-wards with the seraphic look of an affable cherub, opened his arms to the fullest extent and embraced the sofa. Mademoiselle apologetically represented that his impetuosity was a trifle disconcerting, and coyly asked time to consider the

matter. To induce her to take that particular branch of the forked roads, at whose parting she now stood, which led to his bungalow, he redoubled his protestations, and raised the bidding considerably.

"'Well,—*que voulez-vous?* I saw him several times, but I passed only one night in his house.'

"Then it would seem the sweeping molten stream of his lava-like passion began to flag in its career, and to cool, and in a few days it was as cold and petrified as a combination of reason and Chinese 'chops' could make it. Meanwhile, Mademoiselle was faring sumptuously on *daikon* and *sashimi* and the elements of starvation, with a gnawing hunger by way of a cheap and unfailing relish. When she allowed this fact to filter through the P.S. of four pages of a *billet-doux* copied from the *Universal Letter-Writer*, the amorous *savant* mounted the high-stepping steed of sentimentality and executed a series of high-falutin' curvets for her especial benefit and edification.

"In such matters pecuniary considerations were not to be mentioned. Only one kind of women took money for matters of this kind, and he wouldn't insult her ears by mentioning the epithet by which they were designated. Therefore he had not outraged her by offering her anything of the sort, nor would he ever think for a moment of doing so.

"He furthermore contrived to clinch the matter by adding the information that since he had come to Japan he had been very much embarrassed by the gifts ladies *would* persist in thrusting upon him. A certain Japanese Countess with whom he had been

indiscreet had presented him with the gold studs and sleeve-links he was wearing at the moment.

" 'He actually shot out his cuffs and asked me if I did not consider them really *très chic*,' she said slowly with withering scorn.

"Then he had also had an affair with a German lady, and had been in terror lest the *mari* should discover it and challenge him to mortal combat. *She* also had persisted in making donations.

"At this point Mademoiselle got up and gave him something too. It was a piece of her mind and his *congé*, coupled with a not unforcible hint that she did not want to see anything more of him or of his gold sleeve-links either. Also that if he did come to her house again, he would get a taste of her riding-whip.

"However, this little breeze had the effect of fanning the infinitesimal sparks of his moribund passion into a vehement, spasmodic, crackling-thorn-sort of flame. He vowed and protested, and poured forth his devotion in French worthy of Corneille, and in hysterical splutters and blotches of Tsuzi's so-called 'Superior Writing-Ink.'

" 'If you don't believe, here are his letters,' she said, handing Rossy a packet of gilt-edged envelopes.

" 'See for yourself! Je vous les donne.'

"They were a little bit comical, but of course to all cold-blooded outsiders and onlookers love-epistles are apt to sound ridiculous. But they had a distinguished feature that you don't usually find in the ordinary correspondence of folks bent on making

asses of themselves in this particular fashion. I don't know whether you would call them juvenile, or senile, or anile,—they had ends of all three qualities sticking out of them. But in the midst of the streaky torrent of amorous rodomontade, you could always discern the almighty main chance bobbing up to the surface. There were reasons innumerable for not 'coming down with the dust,' and also innumerable promises that it would be forthcoming unflinching. But the difficulties of the present situation were as lions in the path. In the first place he found his salary was scarcely sufficient for one, let alone two. In the next place, he had left Germany without doing his military service, and that was a debt that had to be reckoned with some day,—very soon perhaps. Altogether it was not his fault that he did not take steps to put her in a better position. But he loved her, loved her, loved her!

“‘La nuit dernière était comme ses sœurs,—presque sans sommeil. Ton image flottait continuellement devant mes yeux et tes baisers brûlaient encore sur mes lèvres. Surtout le dernier baiser—diable, il a glacé tout mon sang pour un instant, pour me jeter alors au feu infernal! Mais, patience, tu me payeras pour cela ou je me fais trappiste! Chacun mangera la soupe qu'il a préparée.

“‘Ton dévoué,

“‘EPHRAÏM S. S.’

“The letters, in their own peculiar way, were quite as amusing as anything Prosper Mérimée ever wrote; but the effect was produced in a different way. But of course that's neither here nor there.

"All this time Louise was sinking deeper and deeper in the slough of despond and pecuniary difficulties. She had, by her showing, no one to befriend her,—not a soul. She became sick in body and sicker still in mind. So one day after perusing another flowery composition, in which much was said about devotion, but nothing whatsoever about dollars, she took advantage of the wind-up of the production and replied. Dr. S. had concluded—

" 'Si tu trouves le temps de penser à moi quelques instants ou même de m' écrire peu de mots, tu me rendras bien heureux.

" 'Ton dévoué,

" 'EPHRAIM S. S.'

"She did write a few words explaining her position, and so far from rendering the Doctor happy, she succeeded in making him very miserable; at least one would suppose so to go by the tenor of his reply. Here it is—

" 'Le 24 Juin 1885.

" 'MA CHÈRE AMIE,—Je viens de lire ta lettre et te remercie beaucoup. Je me trouve assez bien, malgré cet horrible temps. Encore deux semaines et nos cours sont finis. Mais il est possible que mon séjour en Japon soit aussi beintôt fini; j'ai été à Kobe à cause de mes affaires militaires, et on n'a pas encore définitivement fixé si je dois partir au commencement d'août on si je peux rester. J'espère qu'on me donne mon congé.

" 'Quant à ta demande financière je regrette que je n'ai pas reçu mon salaire. Je pense que lundi prochain j'aurai mon argent, aussitôt que je l'ai je ferai mon compte. Un monsieur que tu connais m'a aussi demandé une somme, et il sera difficile de la lui refuser, comme autrefois il a été très aimable et généreux. En cas que je suis contraint de partir j'aurais besoin de chaque yen que je possède. J'ai en beaucoup à faire ces derniers jours, mais la semaine prochaine je viendrai te voir.

“ ‘Il m'est un plaisir de l'envoyer, par ton Kuruma-ya, une demi-douzaine de bière. Bon appetit !

“ ‘Mille choses agréables, ton dévoué,

“ ‘EPHRAIM S. S.’

“And such was the lame and impotent conclusion of this precious piece of transcendental gallantry ! Faust contrives to shake off Marguerite with the gift of half-a-dozen of beer, on which he does not even pay the carriage !

“ ‘So this was the end of it ?’ asked Rossignol.

“ ‘Yes ; he mistook me for a beer-swilling Berliner,’ she replied, with all the bitterness inherited from ’70 vibrating in the words.

“ ‘Why didn’t you send this precious present back ?’ inquired Rossy, with a humorous twinkle flickering in his eyes.

“ ‘Send it back !’ she said. ‘No, certainly not ! It is the only thing I have got out of him ! But,’ she went on, ‘I did write asking if he wished me to return the empty bottles !’

“But Faust found to his cost that there was an epilogue to the comedy. Rossy, true to his plighted word, turned up on the 1st of January with a handful of dollar notes, and kicked out the cringing creditors neck and crop when they came meaning mischief. He talks Japanese beautifully under any circumstances, but it was a treat to hear him orating in Nihongo on that occasion.

“Then he started a subscription list to get Made-moiselle out of the country. Most of the boys anted up their four or five dollars, and in a few days there

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was enough put together to get her a ticket to Marseilles, with something over besides to give her a fresh start when she got there. See there; what do you think of that?" he asked, handing over a subscription sheet.

"Three hundred and seventy-seven *yen*," I remarked; "that is really very decent. I notice, though, that one good Samaritan is responsible for a biggish part of it. Who is this that signs himself 'A friend—150 *yen*'?"

Webster did not answer at once. He stroked his chin, and, cocking one eye significantly, he looked at me in a provokingly quizzical manner.

"Yes," he said after a pause, during which light began to dawn upon me. "I see you've got it. It was the German Consul that worked the oracle for us there, and he worked it to some purpose. Dr. Ephraim Schmoller Schmidt *has* got his 300-dollar billet in the *Zohei-kyoku*, but he pocketed no more than the half of his first month's screw."

"And the girl?" I queried, as I got up to catch my train.

"The girl?" answered Webster, sweeping his long legs off the table and starting to his feet. "Well, I guess by this time she is taking in the beauties of the seascape and landscape of the Inland Sea, somewhere on the other side of Akashi Strait. But must you really be off? Well, well, bye-bye till next time, old man. Here comes that last revise."

THE BEAR HUNT ON FUJI-SAN.

I.

PROFESSOR WILSON resolved to give a party to the bachelors,—that is to say, he determined to invite all and sundry of his acquaintances who either did not have European helpmeets at all, or who did have, but who for the nonce were resignedly wrestling with a spell of the festive martyrdom of grass-widowhood. So he opened the Directory, and sat down to hammer out invitations to an “informal,” or, as his misspelling machine insisted on putting it, an “infernal” supper; for that typewriter of his, which he manipulates like a Morse telegraph or a Singer’s sewing-machine, has its own peculiar ideas of orthography. It seems to have been originally built on lines purely phonetic; but the Professor has been trying to convert it from the error of its ways for the past two years, and has only succeeded in hopelessly mixing the drink, and in making it turn out stuff that looks like a Japanese comp.’s first shot at setting up badly-scribbled copy. However, on this occasion most of the *invités* understood what was meant, and most accepted. I didn’t

get a card, because the Professor bailed me up in the compound, and asked me by word of mouth.

"Black-coat?" I inquired.

"Black-coat, or anything you like, from that up to a *fundoshi*, or both included, and nothing besides," he blurted out at me over his shoulder, as he shambled off to his lecture with a cudgel as big as himself, and a pair of boots that once had had heels.

Dudishness is not Wilson's strong point. When he first came to Japan he *did* have a bell-topper, and actually put it on once. That was the first time he went to meet his "boss," but he made the concession to propriety and Philistinism with much inward groaning and travailing of spirit. When he reached home he went outside to spoil the nests in his fowl-yard, and returned with their contents in the chimney-pot. He put it down on the settee in his study, and then, in a fit of absent-mindedness, he tried to seat himself on the top of it. Since that date, as a married Scotch Professor once plaintively and sombrely confided to me, there has been a steady sartorial decline going on visibly in Wilson. Japan, you see, is a Capua. But it acts differently on different natures. In some folks it is the intellectual grip that becomes feeble and flaccid. In other cases it is liver that is the matter. Some men have been known to start newspapers, collect all the subscriptions and the ads. for a year in advance, and stop publication after the first issue. Others have been known to pocket the contents of the church plate and then skip off to 'Frisco for the welfare of

their souls and the good of their health. Drink has done for another lot, while too much *geisha* and *samisen* have often caused the folks at the Rokumei-kwan to shake their heads and gently murmur over their empty glasses, "Another good man gone wrong." Others have blown out their brains, and still others have taken liberties with their jugulars. Some of my scientific friends say it's electricity; I think it's original sin.

Anyhow, it is so in Wilson's case most undoubtedly. It was that fig-leaf apron business that gave the first and fatal indication of pristine moral obliquity in human-kind, and it is in the matter of clothes that Wilson has gone all wrong.

But that's neither here nor there, and has nothing to do with the supper. It was a grand affair, and no mistake, for there's no meanness in Wilson. When he does take a thing in hand he is not the man to make two bites of a cherry. He set all his household to work, and made them work like so many niggers. He piled all his chairs and tables into his studio, and sent out for more. He had in all the cook's sisters and cousins and female relatives to the fourth degree removed, and bade them wait at table. They were all arrayed in the gorgeousness of brand new *kimono* and *obi*, and looked so fetching that you began to understand how it was that Cook-san was so revoltingly ugly himself. There had been so much beauty lavished on the other members of the family that none, not even a redeeming grain, remained for him. For he was hideous, and when he did condescend to grin audibly, you couldn't help mistaking

him for Satan in a good humour. He is a stout, squat-set individual, with a shock bullet-head glued on to his shoulders in much the same fashion as those decapitated Japanese criminals used to be stuck on to the pillory. His eyes are always heavy and fish-like, wonderfully eloquent of low cunning and copious libations of *saké*. Sometimes it's sherry, Wilson says, and he should know, because he pays the bill. But the animal could *cook*, and he did cook that evening, and no mistake, and covered himself with gravy and glory all over.

It didn't take long to thaw the ice and to set the guests' tongues a-wagging. It sounded like the ground-floor of the Tower of Babel. There was a feast of wit and flow, of soul in five different languages, without counting dialects. *Inprimis* there were Doctors Horn and Egmont, who carry about locked up in the secret cupboards of their consciences all the fashionable maladies of Tokyo. They know all about this Ambassador's gouty toe, and all about the root of that Minister's chronic ill-temper; but that has nothing to do with the story. Although they're Deutsch, they can both tell stories in English that make you fall off your seat with cackling. Then there was an Italian Count who was fully up to the form of the Apostles at Pentecost. He told *risque* yarns and cracked jokes in all the languages of Europe, and in several of those of Asia besides. He fell back upon the resources of Oriental philology when his subject-matter became too indecent for artistic treatment in the languages of the West. I believe that was because he didn't know Latin.

Latin of course is *the* tongue in which you can express all kinds of nastiness without a blush. Gibbon gives us solid fragments of indecency wrapped up in Latin footnotes, and Professor Chamberlain ventures on some first-class realism with its aid in his translation of the *Kojiki*. Truly a glorious thing is Latin,—it is a high and lofty privilege to be acquainted with it.

There was Rossignol, who had served his time in the French army in Tunis as a full private. He too “had been a corporal wanst, but had been rejuiced.” A Japanese Professor of Economics, who had also come out high in the Moral Science Tripos at Cambridge, was in the vice-chair, and made things hum in his own immediate neighbourhood. There were besides a stray Irishman or two, with just “a broth av a brogue;” two portly specimens of John Bull, that might have stepped out of one of Punch’s cartoons; and the ubiquitous and much-travelled Scot. You can scarcely heave a brick in the streets of any Treaty Port in the East without hitting a “Sandy,” and getting cursed in Doric for your kindness. The chances are, furthermore, that the anathema will be couched in the Aberdeen dialect. I like to hear the “twang” of it, even when it is speaking Japanese. Aberdeen Scotch and *Yedoko no kotoba* make a cross that effectually puts a set on Riyobu-shinto. Then there was a tall, lanky American, with a well-shaped head on his shoulders, and a handsome dark Vandyke face that somehow, in spite of its good looks, gave you a misty notion of dyspepsia or unrequited affection. It was altogether a splendid and

magnificent function, and we were soon all well on the way to sworn universal brotherhood.

When we had all got about half mellow, Wilson proposed an adjournment to the drawing-room for a "little entertainment" he had provided for us. We adjourned. It was a Japanese conjurer and ventriloquist, with his assistants, that he let loose upon us. They were splendid and first-rate, and we were all hopelessly broken up! There was not a sound in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, that they did not reproduce for our edification and amusement. They gave us an imitation of the rooks and crows in parliament assembled, and all wanting to speak at once, like the legislators in the Japanese Diet, who want to reduce everybody's salary but their own. Then they gave us doves a-cooing and tom-tits a-wooing, and you began to feel awkward, just as you are apt to do when married folks get mutually demonstrative when you call in on an afternoon to leave your card. Next a dog that was being slowly tortured to death in the interests of science in the medical compound adjoining began to howl, as they docked another inch of his tail, and immediately the room was sobbing and moaning with a pathetic canine appeal to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Anon we were treated to something that threw the chorus of the *Batrachoi* of Aristophanes into the shade, and began involuntarily to prospect for the second Plague of Egypt in our boots and pockets. Next the place seemed turned into a saw-pit, and then into a fowl-yard. This was succeeded by the

beauty in the bellow of the blast, and the grandeur in the growling of the gale, and the eloquent outpouring when the lion is a-roaring, and the tiger is a-lashing of his tail. But the finest thing was the grizzly; it was the plantigrade bully of the Rockies to the life.

Rossy was sitting near to me when all this was going on. I noticed he had stopped laughing, and was serious. That meant he had put on his thinking-cap, and when Rossy puts on his thinking-cap you may lay heavy odds that there is some devilment or other getting hatched, and yet not lose your money.

"By Jingo!" he said at last, coming down on my thigh with a blow that might have been a wallop from a shark's tail; "I see the thin end of a thousand dollars sticking out there!"

I remarked that I'd much rather see his liberality exercised in parting with them than with his friendly caresses; for the fellow hits like a twenty-five ton steam-hammer that's got neither conscience nor consideration for the feelings of what it comes down upon.

However, I got over my grumpiness and asked for further information. He said the thing wasn't for publication, and that besides he wouldn't trust any newspaper man out of gaol. I knew it was no use trying to pump him just then, so I gave him up and turned my attention sole and undivided to the performance.

Well, the party broke up, and some of us went home, and some didn't. The last thing that I remember was a bleared and blurred vision of our host, balancing himself first on one foot and then on

the other as he tried to mix a bucketful of whisky and soda for the ventriloquist. He did finally succeed in filling up all the infinity of vacuum in the conjurer's seemingly sponge-like and bottomless stomach, and as I dropped off into a fuddled doze I fancied I saw that worthy man on the flat of his back, helplessly wagging his dumpy hands, and trying to crow like an impotent barn-fowl. Altogether the function was a magnificent success.

II.

Mr. Coolidge, of Boston,—the man with the Vandyke face and the look of dyspepsia *cum* unrequited affection referred to above,—was really in a bad way. He was in love; hopelessly over ears and far beyond the summit of his stuck-up collar, submerged in the mire of the tender passion. And the worst of it was that he was stuck, bogged, utterly “laired,” as a Scotchman would say. He couldn't get back, though he did once try all he knew to make a masterly advance in that direction. No more could he get any forwarder. He simply struggled weltering there, vainly trying perchance to find bottom in the slough of amorous despond.

It was a Miss Kitty Dawson that was the matter. She was neither English nor American; she was Canadian, a B.A., a M^{as}.B., and some folks enviously inclined declared a B.S., which, in her case, was short for blue-stocking, and not for brandy and soda, as it usually is. She could play, she could sing, she could compose oratorios. She could sketch, she

could paint,—pictures, I mean, and not her face, for that never needed the laying-on of artificial colours, her own natural one being always as fresh as any rose,—and she could talk philosophy and write books and newspaper articles. It was this last accomplishment of hers that accounted for her presence in Japan. She had come over by the C.P.S.S. to get impressions, and to retail them at so much per column to a syndicate of wideawake journalists. I don't know whether she could cook or sew the buttons on her husband's shirts when she got one; but my idea is that in a case like hers it really doesn't much matter. You see, there is such a thing as a division of labour, and it's outrageous to expect a female Admirable Crichton to excel in the hodge-work of domestic drudgery.

Coolidge had heard of her, and had contrived to get introduced. He next contrived to fall in love, as already delicately insinuated. He then tried to contrive to marry her, but that wasn't so easy. She didn't want to marry,—at least just then. She said so, and as much as delicately hinted that HE—the right man, that is—had not yet “come along.” Now, although that was bad, it was not utterly crushing. Anyhow, it was a great deal less unsatisfactory than the *Though-I-cannot-be-yours-I-will-never-wed-another* sort of thing.

There's something radically wrong with the moral make-up of a girl who is mean enough to come this high-falutin' sort of nonsense. It strikes one as being altogether too selfish and dog-in-the-mangery. But Miss Kitty wasn't built that way; she was

honest, and, in spite of her fine head, had a first-class digestion, and was altogether a healthy and well-balanced young woman, mentally, morally, and physically.

Now Mr. Coolidge had a sister, and although sisters are usually ohly first-class nuisances, there are exceptions. The other fellow's sisters, for example, are likely to be exceptions. Now Coolidge found his sister useful and helpful. She was a bosom friend of Miss Kitty's, and the mill-dam in which the current of her confidence emptied itself. Therefore when she hinted to Coolidge that Miss Kitty had made up her mind to call no one lord and master who had not shown himself a hero, he was fully inclined to believe it, and felt hot and cold by turns all over. He wasn't a coward ; no one could say that. But then opportunities of picking up a Humane Society's Medal don't offer themselves every morning, and it was no use going loafing round day after day in the wake of Kitty on the off-chance of a hoodlum insulting her, and giving a fellow a show of knocking him into immortal smash for his pains.

But at the same time Coolidge made a mem. of the thing, and waited. For he was no fool, was Coolidge. He didn't make himself too cheap by any means. He was in earnest, and was bent on winning, and he saw pretty soon that Miss Dawson was not the sort of girl that one could afford to make an ass of oneself over, if she was really to be the means of making one forswear bachelorhood for good. So he quietly dropped all protestations of the tender passion, and

worked the friendship racket for all that it was worth. He made himself useful in a hundred ways, and all so unobtrusively that Miss Dawson took the whole thing quite *au naturel*.

When she got her commission from the syndicate to write up the East it was not surprising for her to learn that Mr. Coolidge had business in that quarter also. What did surprise her, though, was to learn just as she was starting that he was one of her employers, and that it was to his influence mainly that she owed her present trip. When she heard this she sat down and, placing her pretty dimpled chin in the palm of her left hand,—left elbow resting on left knee,—indulged in the luxury of five minutes' consecutive thought. On that speaking countenance of hers there was an irregular march of the scud of discontent, varied by detachments of pleasing thoughts. When she got up there was just the suspicion of tenderness in her looks, and of what one who didn't know her would have called the love-light in her eyes. But it wasn't that, or at least if it was she would have indignantly denied it. But she did not, as she at first thought she intended to do, write to give up her commission. She was too sensible for that, and she had now been the best part of two months in Japan.

She hated the rush and the racket and the bustle of hotels, and wanted a quiet place. A peripatetic journalist or artist has rough times of it in Japanese hotels, having as a rule to submit to being interviewed twice every twenty-four hours, and to being made to talk all sorts of nonsense in perpendicular columns of

"chops," and the footprints of a fossil fowl-yard in the vernacular press of the day following. So she was wise, and went to board with Rossy and his wife. Coolidge soon discovered her retreat, and as a natural thing, of course, quickly succeeded in making Rossy's acquaintance. It was not very difficult to do that,—except perhaps for a bill collector or a missionary. Coolidge and Rossy soon got beyond a mere nodding acquaintance, and the former made the latter a confidant in his troubles. It was balm in Gilead for Coolidge to find a sympathetic listener as he unbosomed himself of his hopeless passion. Sixteenth-century folks used to ease themselves of their despair by slashing out the initials of their flame on live oak-trees and so forth, but that sort of thing is now played out. It takes a lot of imagination to get much comfort out of a chunk of wood, even though there's sap in it. Rossy was much ahead of any piece of timber for purposes of this nature. For he had fellow-feeling and sensibility and—oh! lots of things that were very consoling in a case of the description.

Well, one day Rossy startled Vandyke out of the bottomless pit of despair by getting up and offering to lay even money with him that he'd be a Benedict within six months, the stakes to be handed over, either at the end of that period, in case Miss Kitty was still cruising around like Diana in petticoats and blue spectacles in the guise of a literary globe-trotter, or otherwise on the day of the execution. Coolidge looked incredulous, and then Rossy put it another way.

"Suppose the thing were fixed for you, would you be ready to part with a thousand dollars?"

"A thousand dollars! Two of them, and glad to make the bargain."

"All right!" returned Rossy. "The other 'thou' will do to cover expenses. Now you just put yourself in my hands, and leave it entirely to me. And mind when I'm skipper there's to be no back-talk on board *my* boat."

Next morning at breakfast Miss Dawson suddenly asked Rossy where he had got that lovely bear-skin she had seen in the room downstairs. Rossy shifted uneasily on his seat, and said she must be mistaken; there was no such thing in the house that he knew of. Now that was not altogether a lie, but it wasn't very far off one, for there was a splendid pelt of a defunct grizzly in the *jipirikisha* shed adjoining at that very moment. But it didn't suit him to say so.

"Why, talking of bears now, this *is* most interesting. But surely there must be a mistake. Just read that."

She handed over that morning's copy of the *Snorter*, with her finger at a sensational heading of "Pilgrims Chased by a Grizzly on Fuji-san." If the heading was sensational it was well backed up by the text that followed. It was vivid and graphic, and picturesque and dramatic,—all that it was, and more. It was really a fine piece of writing, although I say it that shouldn't, for it was myself that wrote it, and jolly well paid I was for doing it. I got 50 *yen* per column for it, five *yen* being ordinary *Snorter* rates, and the other 45 *yen* being for the skilful exercise of imagination.

"Well, now," answered Rossy, "that is strange! Of course there are no grizzlies in Japan, except those imported by the showman. Only, now when I come to think of it, that's just where the mischief comes from. A week or so back, I saw in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* that a *shiroi-kuma* had escaped from a menagerie that was trying to cozen the heathen out of their cents in Shizuoka, and that it had disappeared in the forest at the base of Fuji."

"Oh, that's in Yoritomo's old hunting-park, is it not? How 'romantic!" said Miss Kitty, clapping her hands.

"Romantic, but not for the man or woman that meets his bearship, I should say! And, talking of that now, what about your trip to Fuji? Of course you can't go alone. That's all nonsense. Certainly there may be exaggeration in this bear-story, but it would be awkward for you to get chased. Of course I can't go with you on the 16th, because I have business that will keep me away from Tokyo all that week. But now that I think of it, I can fix the thing, for a good friend of mine, and a compatriot of yours, is talking of doing the grind about the same date. Now, I'll see him, and make certain. I'll get coolies for you, and put you up to all the wrinkles, and do all I know to get you up and down without inconvenience. Shall we say settled?"

After some little tacking and beating,—for Miss Dawson was a woman,—it was agreed that Rossy should do as he proposed.

III.

The landlords of Subashiri, I was going to say, are the biggest and most voracious sharks out of the sea ; but that would have been speaking altogether too fast. Where the globe-trotter most doth congregate, there the land tends to become sharkiest. In Hakone it is bad, in Enoshima it is worse, and in Nikko it is simply awful. But all these plague spots are as flea-bites alongside of the Fuji district. There the tariff seems to rise in direct proportion to the elevation of the ground. At Gotemba you find they will charge you about twice as much as they would a fellow-countryman of their own. But if you are not a consummate first-class ass, you won't think of raising ructions over that. The supposition is that you give extra trouble, or at least that if you don't you ought to. Besides, in the extra impost there is a nice little sop to your vanity : by implication the local Boniface sets you down as a citizen of a nation of millionaires, and up to a certain point it is not at all unpleasant to be mistaken for a peripatetic Vanderbilt. But the line has to be drawn somewhere, and when it comes, as it does come in the huts at the top of Fuji, to paying just six times as much as your Japanese friend for fare and accommodation a trifle inferior to his, you begin to fancy that it is possible after all to set too high a value upon the accident of being born white, and upon the privilege of paying income-tax to Her Gracious Majesty, and upon the other benefits and blessings of the British Constitution.

Well, these Subashiri folks, holding as they do an intermediate position as regards elevation, have also an intermediate tariff. They put it on stiff, very stiff, to begin with, and then expect you to cover up the enormity with, a top-dressing of *chadai*. That was what they tried with Mr. Coolidge and Miss Dawson's party, at all events, and possibly too with others. For the good of the hotel treasury, it is to be hoped that the swindle was attended with more success in the case of "others" than it was when an attempt was made to play it off on Coolidge and Dawson.

The mischief happened in this wise. Rossy had said he would get a trustworthy coolie as guide for the party, and he had been as good as his word. The coolie had met them at Tokyo station, and had been a veritable guardian angel ever since. So when the Subashiri landlord showed signs of a disposition to fleece, he met with vehement and outspoken opposition from a quarter totally unexpected. However, he fancied he saw what the matter was, and talked of a commission for the guide. To his astonishment this only made matters worse, and, after a long and vigorous *yakamashii*, he had at last to sign and content himself with submitting to the disgrace of presenting an honest and a reasonable bill. He then gave himself up to a profound consideration of the enormity of honesty being found in a guide for the Fugi district. He had just smoked and knocked out his sixteenth pipeful in coming to the conclusion that this coolie must be an outrageous *baka* not to have accepted his proffered

tip for an open show of doing a squeeze, when the horse-hirer from up the street came in with a similar story about the hiring of ponies to go to Umagayeshi.

"It was simply disgraceful; such a simpleton as this ought to be taken in hand by his friends, and locked up in a lunatic asylum. And then the rudeness of the fellow too! The way he talked to one, and the names he misnamed, things were really too disgraceful. Certainly he must have been very highly bribed by the foreigner! But why in the sacred name of Business could the *baka* not take an honest commission from honest folks in addition?"

Meanwhile Miss Dawson, and her escort were well on their way towards Umagayeshi, which they reached at last without any startling adventure. There the horses were sent back, and the party, consisting of the two Europeans, the coolie guide from Tokyo, and two *goriki*, or mountain coolies of the locality, addressed themselves to the ascent.

After entering on the bridle-track above Umagayeshi, the road gets steepish, in some pinches just steep enough to justify a man in placing a strong right arm around a slender waist to help its owner along her onward and upward passage. In one or two very stiffish spots Mr. Coolidge had presumed to offer this attention without any unpleasant consequences following thereupon. Only Miss Dawson blushed furiously when her eye chanced to light upon the snigger that was breaking the Tokyo coolie's phiz all into fissures, like a landscape

touched up by a baby earthquake. At the next semi-vertical she gently slid uphill out of Mr. Coolidge's forwarding embrace, and Mr. C. instantly fell to blessing the coolie *sotto voce*, in the style adopted by the Mt. Ebal division of the offspring of Jacob. The coolie must have caught or guessed the burden of certain of his remarks, for the grin on his features now began at one ear and ran right round to the other.

Miss Dawson, besides being a really clever girl, had a considerable allowance of the indescribable gift that makes a good pressman. One ingredient in it is a power of quiet and unobtrusive observation, the knack of getting folks to set you down as a nobody, or as a born idiot, and of just taking them all to tiny little pieces, and sizing them up so nicely when you've successfully lulled them into the notion that you aren't worth watching. Not that Miss Dawson could ever be taken for nobody, much less for a born fool,—the disguise would have been altogether beyond her capacity, great as that in some things undoubtedly was,—yet she could observe without attracting attention, or rousing the suspicion of the individual she happened to honour with her attention. So when they reached the top of the flight of steps leading into the little temple of Ko-mitake, where the priest seems to drag out a sinful and miserable existence by branding cudgels with spidery legends for the pilgrims, she sat down with a flop and a catching of the breath, and inquired of Coolidge, when she recovered her wind, if he hadn't noticed anything peculiar in that coolie.

"Only that he is deucedly impudent and forward! I have a good mind to——"

"Now, now you are all wrong! I'm sure he is very nice. And do you know I think I must have seen somebody very like him before. And do you notice that he actually *walks*,—fair toe-and-heel work, not a hobble-hobble-jerky up-and-down forward motion like a man brought up on chop-sticks and Japanese *geta* from his tender childhood. Don't you notice also—Good heavens! what is all this?"

She might well ask. A terrific babel of yells and shouts and terrified screams echoed down through the wood, and in an instant a long string of twenty or thirty white-robed pilgrims tore like a whirlwind in at one end of the little shrine and out at the other and down the steps in front of it, with the bells they had tied to their waists clashing and jangling as if the whole country-side were in flames.

"*Kuma, kuma, shiroi kuma,*" they shouted in mad fear as they rushed down the rickety wooden steps in a herd like the devil-possessed Gadarene swine into the sea. The priest and the customer with whom he was chaffering about the price of a cudgel cast one terrified glance over their shoulders, and then joined in the general uproar, and made for the door as if a band of *soshi* had just got in by the window. For it was something even worse than *soshi* that was at the bottom of it all. Miss Dawson had just time to catch one glance of a huge, clumsy, unwieldy monster of the Rockies advancing upon her, pawing and grunting, and to see Coolidge snap out a six-

shooter and open fire, before she fell off in a dead faint into his arms.

About a fortnight after Rossy came into the office in such a guise that I could scarcely recognise him. For the glory of Rossy was his moustache, and, alas, his moustache had disappeared! Poor old Rossy! he did look very glum and melancholy, and generally cut-up and out-of-sorts. Now it is no good being hard upon a poor devil when you see he is so hopelessly foundered as he was. Anyhow, if you are mean enough to insist on chaffing him, at least give him a drink to begin with. So I gave him the best stuff I had in the house, and then he allowed the cat to get out of the bag by the thousandth part of an inch at a time.

"Of course," he wound up, "when I saw that she was landed all right I made off after the bear, for as he turned round to skedaddle and got Coolidge's third fire just right astern of him, the brute gave vent to a yell that could come from nothing short of a human hit in a tender place. I ran down and found him lying in a clump of bushes moaning and bleeding like a homicided porker. Of course the other business came off all right; I saw the execution—the wedding, I mean—at the American Legation this morning."

I remarked that there must have been money in the affair.

"Yes," said Rossy, meditatively stroking the sprouts of his up-coming moustache; "yes, there *was* money in the affair, I admit, but there was also a deuced deal of real hard work. Now, just look here,—first

there were fifty dollars for that bear-skin,—it was the only one to be got for love or money in Yokohama at the time. Then there were fifty dollars to you for writing that stuff about Pilgrims and Bears on Fuji,—it was just about fifty times as much as it was worth. Then there was the hire of that ventriloquist codger,—three days at ten *yen* a day, which, with his expenses, *saké*, and what not, just came to thirty-nine *yen* twenty-six *sen* four *rin*. And then that confounded fool Coolidge must needs forget to draw the bullet from the third cartridge he slapped into his six-shooter. That cost me just 500 *yen*! He hit the poor old chap in a soft spot behind, and there was the very deuce to pay. He meant to have us all up for every offence from ~~murder~~ down to shooting out of Treaty limits, and of course that wouldn't have suited my own particular book at all. So after a deal of parleying and lying and general untruthfulness, we at last compromised the affair for the figure named. When the old fellow gave me a receipt he grinned, and said he wouldn't at all mind making a target of himself at that rate once a month, because it wouldn't interfere with his other business! That old brute had me properly, and it takes a pretty good man to get the drop on Lucien Rossignol, let me tell you! Then there were my own expenses,—loss of time, mental anxiety, and so forth,—say another 100 *yen*. Now, let me see," he went on, taking out his pocket-book and jotting down figures; "there's fifty and fifty—that's a hundred; and thirty-nine, say forty—one hundred and forty—six hundred and forty; seven hundred and forty in all. That leaves

something like a matter of twelve sixty to the good. But it has been dearly earned—confoundedly dearly earned. The peace and harmony of the Rossignol household have gone for ever since the day I scraped off my moustache to go playing the goat on the slopes of Fuji-san !”

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The *Spectator* says:—As a wholesome corrective to what may be called the oleographic style of depicting military life now so much in vogue, Mr. Kipling's brilliant sketches of the barrack-room, realistic in the best sense of the word, deserve a hearty welcome. Here be no inanities of the officers' mess, no apotheosis of the gilded and tawny-moustachioed dragoon, no languid and lisping lancer, no child-sweethearts—none, in fact, of the sentimental paraphernalia familiar to readers of modern military fiction. Here, instead, we have Tommy Atkins as the central figure, and not Tommy Atkins on parade, but in those moods when the natural man finds freest expression—amorous, pugnacious, and thievish—a somewhat earthly personage on the whole, but with occasional gleams of chivalry and devotion lighting up his clouded humanity. Too many so-called realists seem to aim at representing man as continuously animal without any intervals in which his higher nature emerges at all. But Mr. Kipling happily does not belong to this school. The actualities of barrack-room life are not extenuated, but the tone of the whole is sound and manly. The author does not gloss over the animal tendencies of the British private, but he shows how in the grossest natures sparks of nobility may lie hid.

The perusal of these stories cannot fail to inspire the reader with the desire to make further acquaintance with the other writings of the author. They are brimful of humanity and a gallantry that never degenerates into burlesque. In many places a note of genuine pathos is heard. Mr. Kipling is so gifted and versatile that one would gladly see him at work on a larger canvas. But to be so brilliant a teller of short stories is in itself no small distinction.

The *Saturday Review* says:—*The Story of the Gadsbys* is well constructed and humorous in a high degree, and exhibits the author's thorough acquaintance with Anglo-Indian life. Most readers who like sequels will, no doubt, prefer his own story, where they will meet again the Irishman, Mulvaney, and his brother musketeers.

The *Admiralty and Horse Guards Gazette* says:—We can only regret that these two books are not published in England. Of the two, *Soldiers Three* is, we think, the best. It shows a very thorough knowledge of the character of the British soldier and his Indian surroundings, while *The Story of the Gadsbys*, though not quite such agreeable reading, will still be read with amusement by all who know anything of Indian life. No one can read the various stories in *Soldiers Three* without being immensely tickled with the vast amount of real wit contained in the dialogue.

The *Home and Colonial Mail* says:—The foibles of Anglo-Indian society have been frequently sketched, and some full-blossomed incident of Indian life has budded into the three-volume novel before to-day; but we doubt if anything has ever been written about society in India which can compare in brilliancy and originality to the sketches of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, a new writer, who is assuredly destined to make a distinct mark in literature. Mr. Kipling, who would doubtless come under Mr. Robert Buchanan's ban as a pessimistic young man, has a power of observation truly marvellous, and as

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this faculty is combined with another equally rare—that of recording what he observes with caustic and brilliant touches—the result is easy to imagine. It is true that Mr. Kipling lays himself open to the remark that he is a cynic as well as a humorist, but Thackeray came in for little compliments of this kind, and Mr. Kipling will, no doubt, endeavour to bear himself with becoming modesty under such circumstances.

His knowledge of Anglo-Indian human nature, which is ordinary human nature under great provocation, is profound,—we were going to say awful,—and he can go from grave to gay with the facility of a true artist. His dialogue is extremely clever, and we venture to think that he is not likely to confine his attention to the miniature world he has depicted so well, but will take a wider field. Should he turn his attention to writing for the stage, he ought to score a great success. In *The Story of the Gadsbys* and *Under the Deodars*, Mr. Kipling deals with society at Simla. *Soldiers Three* is dedicated to Tommy Atkins, and is an instance of its author's versatility. In *Black and White* he deals with native life, and here too Mr. Kipling is quite at home. All these books are written in a style all the author's own, and they only require to be known on this side to be appreciated. They are published by Messrs. Wheeler & Co., of Allahabad, who have shown considerable enterprise in issuing these volumes in cheap form. Well got-up, with covers artistically designed, each conveying a characteristic idea, these little volumes would do credit to any library.

The *Civil and Military Gazette* says:—The stories show the versatility of the writer. In *Soldiers Three* he is completely the master of three separate dialects (shall we call them?), and of the soldier's vocabulary and mode of thought and expression. In *The Story of the Gadsbys* we have charmingly and characteristically sketched the character of a bright young girl developed, later on, into the loving and tender wife. His pictures of Anglo-Indian life are finished works of art, full of go and brightness, true to nature in its many aspects, and enlivened with a quaint fancy, a ready wit, and a faculty of phrase and expression seldom met with.

The *Saturday Review* says:—The worst of recommending Mr. Wheeler's publications, which we do very heartily, is that apparently they are difficult to procure. They appear in paper-covered little volumes; but these volumes are not found on English railway bookstalls. Very little that is so new and so good can be discovered in those shrines of fugitive literature. Mr. Kipling is a new writer, or a writer new to the English as distinct from the Anglo-Indian public. He is so clever, so fresh, and so cynical that he must be young; like other people, he will be kinder to life when he has seen more of it. Clever people usually begin with a little aversion, which is toned down, in life as in love, to a friendly resignation, if it is not toned up to something warmer by longer experience. Mr. Kipling's least cynical stories are those in *In Black and White*, studies of native life and character. He is far happier with Afghan homicides and old ford-watchers, and even with fair Lalun, "whose profession was the most ancient in the world," and whose house was

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built upon the city wall, than with the flirts and fribbles of the hills. His "black men" (as Macaulay would have called them) are excellent men, full of courage, cunning, revenge, and with points of honour of their own. We are more in sympathy with their ancient semi-barbarism than with the inexpensive rank and second-hand fashion of Simla.

An invidious critic might say, and not untruly, that Mr. Kipling has, consciously or unconsciously, formed himself on the model of Mr. Bret Harte. He has something of Mr. Harte's elliptic and allusive manner, though his grammar is very much better. He has Mr. Harte's liking for good qualities where they have the charm of the unexpected. Perhaps the similarity is increased by the choice of topics and events on the fringes of alien civilisations. It may also be conjectured that Mr. Kipling is not ignorant of "Gyp's" works. In any case he has wit, humour, observation; he can tell a story, and he does not always disdain pathos, even when the pathetic is a little too obvious. People will probably expect Mr. Kipling, with all these graces of his, to try his hand at a long novel. We are a nation that likes quantity. But it may very probably turn out that Mr. Kipling is best at short stories and sketches.

Perhaps the most excellent of his tales is "Dray Yara Yew Dee," the confession to an Englishman of a horse-dealer from the Northern frontier. This character, in his cunning and his honesty, his madness of revenge, his love, his misery, his honour, is to our mind a little masterpiece. There is a poetry and a melancholy about the picture which it would be hard, perhaps impossible, to find in more than one or two barbaric or savage portraits from a European hand. His confession must be read; we shall not spoil it by analysis. The "Judgment of Dungara" is as good, in a comic and cynical manner; so is the tale of a "sahib, called Yankum Sahib." Missionaries ought to get the former by heart, and magistrates the latter. "Gemini," the story of Ram Dass and Durga Dass, might make a Radical Indophile laugh, and might teach him a good deal about his clients. "In Flood Time" is a little prose idyl of epical strength; there is something primitive in the adventure, and something very sympathetic in the old warder of the ford who tells the tale. The "Sending of Dana Da" is an Icelandic kind of miracle worked on esoteric Buddhists to their confusion and sorrow. The sending wherewith Dana Da vexed Lone Sahib was a sending of kittens, not nice young vivacious kittens, but kittens in their babyhood, and they vexed Lone Sahib sore. "On the City Wall" is the last, and certainly one of the very best, of the stories; the tale of conspiracy, riot, prison-breaking, organised by Lalun the Fair and Wali Dad, "a young Mahommedan who was suffering acutely from Education of the English variety, and knew it." This Wali Dad is as clever a study as that of the Pathan horse-thief; his modern melancholy, infidelity, *Weltschmerz*, and all the rest of it, leave him at bottom as thorough a Moslem fanatic as ever yelled "Ya Hasan! Ya Hussain!" How the British soldiers quell a multitude of yelling fanatics, without drawing a bayonet or firing a shot, is pleasant to read. And, at the end of the riot, there we find Agnostic Wali Dad, "shoeless, turbanless, and

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frothing at the mouth ; the flesh on his chest bruised and bleeding from the vehemence with which he had smitten himself." Wherefore we part from Wali Dad respecting him rather more than in his character of educated Unbeliever ; for the attitude and actions of the fanatic were more sincere than the sights and sneers of " the product."

On the whole, Mr. Kipling's *Under the Deodars* is more conventional and less interesting than his studies of native life. There is comparatively little variety in "playing lawn-tennis with the Seventh Commandment." Mr. Kipling, in his preface, intimates that Anglo-Indian society has other and more seemly diversions. Any persons who wish to see the misery, the seamy, sorry side of irregular love-affairs, may turn to "The Hill of Illusion." It is enough to convert a man or woman on the verge of guilt by reminding them that, after all, they will be no happier than they have been, and much less respectable. "A Wayside Comedy" contains a tragedy almost impossible in its absurd and miserable complexity of relations. Only a very small and very remote Anglo-Indian station could have produced this comedy, or tolerated it ; and yet what were the wretched men and women to do on this side of suicide ? The freaks of Mrs. Hawksbee and Mrs. Mallowe are more commonplace and rather strained in their cleverness. But, on the whole, the two little volumes, with Mr. Kipling's *Departmental Ditties*, give the impression that there is a new and enjoyable talent at work in Anglo-Indian literature.

The *World* says :—There has somehow come into our hands a little book of stories called *The Phantom Rickshaw* (Wheeler & Co., Allahabad), by Mr. Rudyard Kipling, which has greatly interested us. The stories are four in number, all of Indian manufacture, and all in more or less degree what their writer calls "eerie." Of the writer himself we have been told that he has the great fortune to be still young, and if this be so he should do good things before he grows old. The best, and very far the best to our mind, of these stories is that called "The Man who would be King," and this is a striking piece of work, whimsical, absurd, anything else you like, but full of invention and written with singular appreciation of style. All the stories have style ; indeed the sense for language is the most promising thing about the work, and especially a sense for the language most effective in this whimsical kind of writing, the language which does not put everything down on the paper, like a bailiff (to use Hazlitt's illustration) distraining for rent, but leaves something for the reader to fill in for himself. There is as much promise in these tales as anything the London presses have offered us for a long day.

The *World* says :—In the spring of this year we wrote of a little book called *The Phantom Rickshaw*, a collection of stories of English life in India, by one Mr. Rudyard Kipling. They were good, but we have just read two other little books from the same hand which are better. The names of these are *Soldiers Three* and *Wee Willie Winkie*, both being published by Wheeler, of Allahabad.

Soldiers Three is a very remarkable piece of work, and Terence Mulvaney,

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

the Irishman—the D'Artagnan of these Musketeers, his comrades being a Cockney and a Yorkshireman—is a figure not unworthy of the Old Masters. No Divine Comedy this, but a very human one; the book of the private soldier's life, its fun and its hardship, its pathos and its tragedy, its heroism and its brutality—not written with bald literalness, but filed and transformed into literature, and illuminated with the unfamiliar colours of the Indian landscape. The best of the stories is that called "With the Main Guard," wherein Terence, to cheat his comrades out of the horrors of the Indian summer night, when in that merciless heat sleep was impossible and life itself hardly to be borne, relates a Homeric struggle between our troops and the Pathans at bayonet's-point in a narrow pass, in language of extraordinary force and picturesqueness, adorned with a profusion of wildly humorous images which even Mr. Bret Harte's miners have never surpassed. This is the best, but all are good, each after its kind; though the first is rather unintelligible to home-keeping Englishmen from its too frequent use of Indian terms, a mistake which Mr. Kipling has wisely not repeated. His style exactly fits the measure of the short story, terse, pointed, suggestive; his humour is rich and many-sided; and his vocabulary is most assuredly both extensive and peculiar; coarse sometimes, no doubt, sometimes perhaps brutal, but always pertinent in its coarseness and artistic even in its brutality; while Mulvaney—that "grizzled, tender, and very wise Ulysses"—through all the degradation of the Cells and the Canteen has preserved some sense of better things, rising sometimes into a rude nobility of soul which is genuinely pathetic. Boastful big blackguard as he is, one's heart yet warms to him as it warms to old Dalgetty. His passion of the past, though the past he savours be an evil one, has the real ring of poetry in it. "Eyah! they was great times. I'm ould now; my hide's worn off in patches; sinthry-go has dis-conceited me, an' I'm a married man tu. But I've had my day, an' nothin' can take away the taste av that! O my time past, whin I put me fut through ivry livin' wan av the Tin Commandmints between Revilly and Lights Out, blew the froth off a pewter, wiped me mustache wid the back av me hand, an' slept on ut all as quiet as a little child!" *Etiam hac meminisse juvabit.* These stories are certainly very striking things—the freshest and most genuine of their kind that we have met with since *The Luck of Roaring Camp* and its fellows came over the Atlantic.



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